‘It’s insane’: Pacquiao fame likened to Ali’s

By Roy Luarca

LAS VEGAS—“I’VE BEEN THIS BEFORE with Ali years and years ago. This is the same type of reaction. Ali was Ali, but Manny’s getting there.”

This was how Bob Arum described the frenzy that greeted Manny Pacquiao’s grand arrival at Mandalay Bay on Tuesday afternoon, where the Filipino ring icon instantly drew a swarm of fans and journalists upon stepping out of a 56-seater luxury bus bearing his image.

IT’S INSANE/A15

BUSINESS / B1
SM group to invest P25B in 2009 expansion projects

ACROSS / A17
Radioman’s killer gets up to 17 years for homicide

METRO / A23
Rep. Zialcita’s sister arrested for estafa

WORLD / A26
Obama marks 100th day in White House

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, April 30, 2009 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 141 P18 website www.inquirer.net

Is summer over? Just early rains, says Pagasa

By Alcuin Papa

THE INTERMITTENT showers in Metro Manila and other parts of the country don’t a rainy season make.

Summer, or the dry

ALCUIN PAPA/A15

“FOR MY CHILDREN,” Mike Defensor, President Arroyo’s ex-chief of staff, tells the media to explain why he’s pushing through with his case vs Jun Lozada (at right on his way to jail) all the way to the Supreme Court if need be “to clear my name.” Left to right are Mikee, 13, Mica, 8, Mika, 6, Miguel, 11 and wife Julie.

DAVID MOZO

Free Lozada movement on

Cory, Erap, senators, traders air support

TWO FORMER PRESIDENTS, a group of Makati businessmen, several senators and a movement for good governance threw their support behind whistle-blower Rodolfo “Jun” Lozada Jr. who was arrested yesterday on perjury charges.

“I appeal to all freedom-loving Filipinos to support Mr. Lozada in every way possible and to make it known, loud and clear, that he is not alone,” former President Corazon Aquino said last night to a successor.

Aquino, who is battling colon cancer, said she was deeply saddened by the news of Lozada’s arrest and detention. She has strongly supported Lozada in exposing the involvement of the First Couple in the NBN-ZTE deal.

“I shall pray for him that he

CORY, ERAP/A10

NBN-ZTE whistle-blower arrested, won’t post bail

A GATHERING OF GRACES President Arroyo invites the bishops for a souvenir photo after the unveiling rites of the marker for the renovation of the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral. Ms Arroyo leads the special guests during the celebration of the 75th Archdiocesan anniversary on Tuesday in Cebu City with Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal (right). Others present are the Papal Nuncio H.E. Edward Joseph Adams, Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, Vice Mayor Michael Rama and Press Secretary Cerge Remonde.

PALACE PHOTO

By DJ Yap and Allison W. Lopez

THE ARRESTING OFFICERS of whistle-blower Rodolfo “Jun” Lozada used a “password” yesterday to gain entry to the De La Salle Greenhills campus in Mandaluyong City, where Lozada and his family had been staying under the protection of nuns for more than a year.

The password was “Birthday party sa Cubao.”

Surrounded by supporters, Lozada was arrested on perjury charges on the strength of a warrant issued by a Manila judge, just one of his 16 legal battles since he blew the whistle on the scrapped National Broadband Network-ZTE deal more than a year ago.

He told a Senate probe last year that the $329-million deal between the government and China’s ZTE Corp. was overpriced by $130 million, way beyond the normal ceilings, to accom-

FREE LOZADA/A10

DFA staff appeal to GMA: Respect career officers

By Nikko Dizon and TJ Burgonio

IN AN UNPRECEDENTED move, a “demoralized” foreign service corps yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to “reconsider” the appointments of the two highest ranking military officials to diplomatic posts in favor of career officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The corps said in a petition

DFA STAFF/A15

La Gloria town swine flu Ground Zero

LA GLORIA, MEXICO—EVERYONE TOLD Maria del Carmen Hernandez that her kindergartener’s illness was just a regular cold. But it seemed like the whole town of 3,000 was getting sick.

As early as February, neighbors all around her were coming down with unusually strong flu symptoms—and the caseload kept growing. When state health workers came to investigate March 23, some 1,300 people sought their medical help. About 400 were diagnosed with acute respiratory infections and sent home with antibiotics and surgical masks.

Five-year-old Edgar Hernandez was still healthy then. Hernandez wanted to keep him home from school so he wouldn’t get sick, but her husband said, “We can’t be afraid of what might or might not happen.”

There he came home with a fever and a

LA GLORIA/A14

Rescuers to be honored for bravery, sacrifice

By Villamor Visaya Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

SANTIAGO CITY, ISABELA—FOR more than a week, 10 soldiers trekked the treacherous Sierra Madre mountains, climbing 80-degree rocks and cliffs and crossing swollen rivers to retrieve the bodies of seven passengers of a plane that crashed on April 2 in Baggao, Cagayan.

For their courage and sacrifice, the soldiers, all belonging to the Army, will

RESCUERS/A15

Biazon questions destab, kill-GMA plot stories

By Christine O. Avendaño and Terra Quimpando

SEN. RODOLFO BIAZON IS SCRATCHing his head, trying to figure out the latest coup stories from President Macapagal-Arroyo’s men.

“This is a serious matter and we need an explanation from the Executive Department,” said Biazon, a former chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Officials of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) have disclosed alleged new destabilization plots with the arrest on Thursday—not Friday as previously reported—of six former soldiers and a New Zealand busi-

BIAZON/A16

Roxas unstoppable to fix country, prepared to make it happen in 2010

By Michael Lim Ubac

NOTHING CAN STOP SEN. MAR ROXAS from running for President in 2010.

“What other meaning can my life have other than that?” Roxas said at a dinner on Tuesday with business editors and reporters during which he declared that he would not be deflected from his goal.

“I am ready to serve. I am prepared to make it happen. I think I’m the best qualified, competence-wise, value-wise. And I owe it to my country to try what I can and fix it,” said the 55-year-old senator.

ROXAS/A15

MAR ROXAS: What higher calling can there be than to try and fix your country?

Bank deposit insurance raised to ₱500,000

By TJ Burgonio

A MEASURE DOUBLING THE INSURance coverage of deposits to ₱500,000 to shield them from any bank closures amid the global economic downturn was signed into law yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo signed Republic Act No. 9979 after handing out awards to 25 outstanding locators in the Philippine Economic Zone Authority at the World Trade Center in Pasay.

BANK/A11

PRIME TIME President Arroyo confers on Henry Sy, SM Prime Holdings chair, the Gawad Likas ng Kalakalan during the 30th National Conference of employers which is themed on PM’s response to the global crisis. Standing are Emilio Yap (left) and Hans Sy.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second
FRONTPAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/news

SUERTRES
4D 2 3 16
9 6 7

FOUR DIGIT
5 1 6 6
8 7 6

MEGALOTTO 6/45
6 17 26 33 34 41
P46,469,383.20

Tax scam 'brains' lingers in China

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A TEXTILE COMPANY OWNER ACCUSED OF masterminding the multimillion-peso tax credit scam in the 1990s is asking the Sandiganbayan antigraft court to allow him to commute to stay abroad.

Through his lawyers, businessman Faustino Chingkoe informed the Sandiganbayan 4th Division that he got sick while visiting China and would need another month to recover.

Chingkoe was given a travel authority by the 4th Division, where he is facing a number of graft cases, to go on a month-long visit to China and Cambodia from March 25 to April 24.

Because of his condition, Chingkoe asked for a one-month extension of his travel authority until May 24, to "allow him to properly convalesce from his ailments and to prepare some his return trip to the country."

'Diagnosis record'

Chingkoe attached to his motion a "diagnosis record" from a "Peking University Shenzhen Hospital," written in Chinese and dated April 23, stating he was "suffering from high blood pressure, sleeplessness, stress and numbness."

The lawyers said Chingkoe's mother was willing to testify in court to support her son's motion.

State prosecutors last week asked the court to recall the travel authority it had issued to the businessman as well as cancel his passport, citing a 1st Division order for the arrest of Chingkoe and his co-accused.

Graft, falsification charges

Chingkoe, his wife Gloria, two other officials of his 813-man Textile Industrial Corp. (Philstar) and four former Customs department officials have been charged with plunder for allegedly conspiring to fraudulently obtain some P74 million worth of tax credit certificates (TCCs) for Pilstar.

He is also facing graft and falsification charges for similar offenses involving his other companies.

Gone before the warrant

Nine days before the unbailable charge of plunder was filed with the 1st Division on March 18, however, the 4th Division granted Chingkoe's request for travel.

By the time the 1st Division issued an arrest warrant against him on April 13, Chingkoe was already in China.

The Chingkoe couple are the major suspects in the tax credit scam of the mid-1990s. Some 64 companies they own or run allegedly illegally obtained TCCs worth about P8.3 billion.

Tax credits

Tax credits are refund payments that export companies are allowed to claim for duties paid on imported materials used to manufacture products for re-export. The government issues TCCs instead of cash refunds, which companies can use to settle tax obligations. Companies can also sell the TCCs to other companies.

Top bets keep places in new SWS survey

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO AND senators Manny Villar, Loren Legarda and Pimentel Jr. remain the top choices for the "top recommended successors" in Pres. dent Macapagal-Arroyo in the Social Weather Stations (SWS) Survey for the First Quarter of 2009.

The survey conducted from Feb. 20 to Feb. 23, asked the question, "Under the present Constitution, the term of President Arroyo is up to 2010 only, and there will be an election for a new President in May 2010. Who do you think are good leaders who should succeed President Arroyo as President? You may give up to three names."

In free question, 27 percent named De Castro, 26 percent named Villar, 25 percent named Legarda, and 23 percent named Escudero.

The SWS said in survey has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Others mentioned were senators Jinggoy Estrada (13 percent) and Panfilo Lacson (14 percent), and former President Joseph Estrada (13 percent).

Also mentioned were Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago (4 percent), Senators Richard Gordon, Ramon Revilla Jr., Ruggero Recto, Francis Pangilinan, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando garnered about 1 percent each.

"Thirteen percent could not give an answer, and 7 percent had no one to recommend," SWS said in a press statement.

Compared to a previous survey round in December 2008, there was a declining trend for De Castro (4 points), Legarda (3 points) and Villar (1 point), SWS added.

There was an increase in mentions for Recto (3 points), Escudero (4 points), Santiago (1 point), and for Estrada (2 points), SWS noted.

"The question wording was exactly the same as in the past six quarterly surveys," SWS said.

The survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, Luzon outside Metro Manila, Visayas and Mindanao.

Loren-Cbiz polls strong

NO EXCUSE TO BRING OUT THE champagne just yet, but she could be all set in party.

Based on the results of an unreleased survey conducted by Pulse Asia last year, Sen. Loren Legarda's bid was tenuous to be optimistic.

The survey, conducted from July 1-14 last year, tracked down the sentiment of Filipino voters who identified three possible presidential and vice presidential tandems as their choices, with Legarda leading the list. The tandems were Legarda and colleague Sen. Francis Escudero, Sen. Manuel Villar and Vice President Noli de Castro and Senators Sito Pimentel and Francis Pangilinan.

The data was shared by Legarda with this writer and several other journalists invited for lunch at the Manila Polo Club. Although it was not clear why the data was not released and who commissioned the survey, Pulse Asia yesterday confirmed that they took the survey in July 2008.

"The survey indicated that the Legarda-Escudero pairing, if it happens, has a big chance of winning. The figures were almost 40 percent, but its Escudero-Legarda tandem only had a 20-percent chance," said Legarda, whose quest for the presidency was never kept a secret.

Based on the survey, a Legarda-Escudero tandem was the popular choice of Class A-B-C voters, at 43 percent, although among the "D" crowd, the voting turn also high, at 40 percent. Trailing the pair were the Villar-De Castro and Recto-Pangilinan pairings.

Both Escudero and Legarda belong in the Nacionalista Party's Coalition (NPC) led by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco. Legarda said the NPC currently has two presidential candidates, adding that it was up to the party nation to say if she was it.

The senator, however, said she had not yet made a decision on whether or not to push through with her bid. "I am giving myself until the end before I make an official declaration," she said. Arlyn dela Cruz, contributor

Laguna solon disqualified from post

LAGUNA REP. ERIS HERNANDEZ YESTERDAY revealed that the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET) had voted 6-3 to strip him of his position due to lack of residency.

In an interview with the Inquirer, Hernandez said he was the last man to know about the HRET decision which had been the talk in the House since Tuesday night. "This is really politically motivated, I have not received a copy of the HRET decision and yet my foes have already hailed it out," he said.

Hernandez said his lawyers would immediately file a petition for certiorari once they receive the copy of the ruling to prevent the HRET from implementing his disqualification.

"I'm determined to pursue all the legal remedies available to fight this highly politicized decision," the embattled lawmaker said.

House Speaker Prospero Nograles declined to comment, saying he has yet to receive a copy of the HRET decision. "It's just news to me. Personally, as a member of the House, I would not want to see him removed from the House en all of members on overwhelmingly," said Nograles.

A certain Jovan Thorsen of Santa Rosa filed the case against Hernandez shortly after he won Laguna's first district by 35,000 votes over Sen. Joaquin, son of former Rep. Climaco Joaquin. Vicente claimed that Hernandez lived in the district for less than a year but Hernandez claimed that he had been a resident in the area for more than two years, adding that he was evident in the contract since it was made verbally with the townhouse owner.

Hernandez, the husband of actress Sharon Cuneta, used to be a board member and vice governor of Laguna under the province's second district.

The actress-turned-politician said he was upset and disappointed that his fellow lawmakers disregarded documentary evidence, including receipts of payments for utility bills, to prove he was a resident of Sta. Rosa City. Off C. Cabangon-Chua, Jr. and Marlon Ramos

Italian sighted in Sulu

ZAMBOANGA CITY—ITALIAN HOSTAGE Abe Mgisi is alive and had been sighted with a band of Abu Sayyaf bandits, officials said yesterday.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said Mgisi was sighted in the company of the group led by Damit Ignasi, who is also known as Abu Adib.

"He is being held by the group of Ignasi. Our troops know where they are," Puno told the Inquirer by phone.

But he declined to elaborate when and where Mgisi and his captors were sighted.

Ignasi is based in Indanan, where government troops had been deployed.

Sulu Governor Abdusakur Tan confirmed that Mgisi is alive.

"The Abu Sayyaf would not hand him because he helps procure them (from troop offenders)," Tan said.

But Tan would also not say where and when Mgisi was sighted.

He also contradicted Puno's assurances on Mgisi's being under the custody of Ignasi, adding that there was no confidence that could reinforce it.

Tan said his commander had been in mountain contact with the Abu Sayyaf group, which has been holding Mgisi in captivity since Jan. 15.

The Italian national, Swiss Andreas Notter and Filipina engineer Mary Jean Lacaba were on their way to the Jolo airport when attacked just outside the Sulu provincial capital in Barbal town. Lacaba and Notter have since been released.

SC affirms forfeiture of telecom shares

Failon gives statement to NBI

By Allison W. Lopez
and Rachel Miranda

ANSELMO SIMON ANCHETA TEO Failon yesterday gave a "more comprehensive" statement on his wife Trinidad's death at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) headquarters in Manila.

Failon's lawyer Alfred Mako told reporters that the broadcaster and his eldest daughter Kaye Giang were subjected to two kinds of questioning: one from NBI investigators, and another from psychologists and psychiatrists conducting a psychological autopsy.

"Ang sabong statement na binigay ni Tito sa pulis, hindi lang sa statement ng pulis, the statement, hindi ni confirm ng NBI, nag-iba [being sworn] po na deposition. [The first statement that Tito gave the police was based only on the questions of the police. This time, based on the confession of the NBI, there are questions that must be asked]," Mako said.

NBI director Nonnie Mamaniag said a crime had not been established in their probe on the fatal shooting of Failon's wife.

"We have not established yet that there is a crime. If it is suicide, then there is no crime," said Mamaniag, adding that the NBI still needed the help of the Philippine National Police.

Regional Director Jaypee Bit-Ok Ao, chief of the NBI Anti-Terrorism Division and concurrent Intern spokesman, said the investigation leaned toward suicide but clarified that the probe was still ongoing.

"Our investigation is leaning to suicide but our probe is not yet over so we cannot categorically say it is suicide," said Diaz in an interview.

Failon's camp also gave yesterday handwriting samples of Nina Rizon for comparison with the alleged suicide note found inside the couple's house.

They also handed investigators an affidavit from Wendi Alano Pacheco, who said the year her mother died, read another letter from Nina to Joy Teo. This also underwent questioning yesterday from the psychologists at NBI.

Mako criticized what he saw as a "premature" release of the results in an ongoing investigation.

"They said we have considered the results of the public info results, but the police themselves (are the ones releasing the results)," he said.

By Norman Bordadora

THE SUPREME COURT EN BANC HAS UPheld a Sandiganbayan decision directing the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. to deliver to the government 111,413 PTIC shares registered in the name of Prime Holdings.

The Supreme Court said the PTIC should also deliver to the government the dividends, interest and earnings of the contested shares that were found to be part of the ill-gotten wealth of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos "and therefore, public money."

The Presidential Commission on Good Government, the agency tasked with the recovery of the Marcos ill-gotten assets, has estimated the dividends from the shares at P6.5 billion.

"It would be absurd to award the shares to the Republic as their owner and not include the dividends and interests accruing thereto," the high court said in its decision promulgated on April 21 and penned by Associate Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales.

PLDT shares

The shares were the subject of a case that the government brought before the Sandiganbayan in 1987 against the late Eugenio Lopez Jr., his wife Isabela Cojuangco and Prime Holdings to recover a block of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) shares that it said were part of the ill-gotten assets of the dictator Marcos.

The PLDT shares were owned by the PTIC and registered in the name of Prime Holdings, the three companies being held by the Cojuangco through a complex cross-shareholding structure.

At the time the case was filed, PTIC was the biggest stockholder of PLDT, owning 26 percent. The Cojuangco family owned the controlling stake in Prime Holdings, making it the single biggest stockholder of the telecom firm at the time.

The government alleged that Marcos was the real owner of the PLDT shares and that the Cojuangcos and Prime Holdings had acquired the shares by using their influence over the dictator.

On Jan. 20, 2006, the Supreme Court ruled that the government was the owner of the more than 300,000 PTIC shares in the name of Prime Holdings.

The Sandiganbayan initially dismissed the government's case for the recovery of the shares but on Dec. 14, 2006, issued a writ for the issuance of the shares to government but denied the accounting of the dividends.

On a motion for reconsideration from the government, the anti-graft court on Nov. 7, 2007, directed the transfer of the shares as well as the interest on them to the government, saying the Supreme Court decision rendered the "fruits" of the ill-gotten shares.

Respondents Imelda Cojuangco, the estate of Ramon Cojuangco and PCI ruled for a reconsideration of the November 2007 Sandiganbayan decision arguing that the Supreme Court's January 2006 decision did not include a "disposition of dividends and interests accruing to the shares" adjudicated as belonging to the government.

'Crippled owner'

In upholding the November 2007 Sandiganbayan decision, the Supreme Court said: "It would be absurd to award the shares to the Republic as their owner and not include the dividends and interests accruing thereto."

An owner who cannot exercise the attributes of ownership is "a crippled owner," the high court said.

"It is thus clear that the Republic is entitled to the dividends accruing from the subject 111,413 shares since 1986 when they were sequestered up to the time they were transferred to Metro Pacific Ltd. Feb. 28, 2007," the high court said.

"The Cojuangcos' main contention in their motion for reconsideration of the Court's decision — excluding the dividends, interest and earnings accruing to the shares of stock from being accounted for and remitted," the high court said.

Duque inspects Naia measures vs swine flu

By Jaymee Aning

HEALTH SECRETARY FRANCISCO Duque III yesterday inspected measures being implemented at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) in Pasay City to prevent the possible entry and spread of the dreaded swine flu virus.

Duque, accompanied by Bureau of Quarantine director Edgardo Saldana and airport officials, inspected a thermal scanner at the arrival concourse point at passengers who have just disembarked from a Korean Air Lines flight around 11 a.m.

Aside from being scanned for fever, the passengers are also required to walk on a floor mat laced with antiseptic solution to disinfect their shoes.

At the end of the concourse is a makeshift tent that functions as a temporary confinement area where passengers with flu symptoms will undergo on-the-spot check by Naia and Bureau of Quarantine doctors.

Passengers with flu symptoms would be brought to the research centers for Tropical Medicine, Lung Center of the Philippines, or San Lazaro Hospital for further observation.

Duque said passengers who had been to Mexico, United States, Canada or other countries with confirmed swine flu outbreaks should undergo self-quarantine and "social distancing" for 10 days.

"If they develop flu-like symptoms, they should come here (Naia) and meet with a panel of (both, handkerchief or surgical mask, and seek medical help immediately," Duque said. With reports from Christine V. Esguerra, Michael Lim Ubac and GMA Cabuenyos Jr.

33 Koreans granted investors' visas

By Jaymee Aning

THIRTY-THREE SOUTH KOREANS based in Baguio City completed the first recipients of the long-awaited "job generation visa" offered by the Bureau of Immigration to foreign businessmen employing at least 10 Filipino workers.

The Koreans, composed of 12 principal applicants and their 21 dependents, received their certificates of visa waiver (SVRV) from Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan in a ceremony held during the inauguration of the BI Field Office in Baguio on Friday.

Those who received their visa were Hong Yun, Kwang Hyo Choi, Lee Seung Gil, Jung Jongsoo, Hwa Soo Lee, Lee Jong Jae, Kim Jung Kyu, Kyung Wuk Lee, Seung Hee Koo, Young Ghun Han, Yong Duk Yoo and Eom Sun Yong.

Libanan, in a statement, said the visa recipients were either owners or representatives of various language schools in Baguio where many young Korean students are enrolled and which employ a total 673 Filipino full-time workers, mostly English language instructors.

The commissioner said that with the promulgation of SVRV in the metropolis, the capital "is expected to see more businessmen and entrepreneurs to avail of the new visa that would enable them to stay in the country indefinitely."

The BI chief cited statistics showing that at least 10,000 foreign businessmen and entrepreneurs who are holders of working and investor visas, and are setting up businesses in Baguio.

"We are encouraging other foreigners doing business in Baguio to avail of this visa as this is one way of helping create jobs for the locals and livelihood opportunities that they generate our community now," Libanan said.

According to Ricardo Cabochan, acting BI Baguio alien control officer, the 12 Koreans come from eight language schools in Baguio, namely the Choice and Success International Language School, Pines International Academy Corp. and Hanguk Language School, Campus Mission Int'l. Phils., Global Connect English Learning Center, Globalite Language Center Corp., and Help English Language Program, Inc.

Earlier, Libanan also gave SVRV to two Americans, a Chinese, a Malaysian, and a Taiwanese—all of them businessmen.

Tax eyed on plastic bag use

THE USE OF PLASTIC bags, which are harmful to the environment, should be stopped or discouraged through taxation, a lawmaker has proposed.

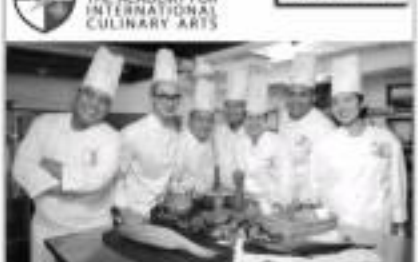
Albay Rep. Al Francis Bichara said he did not mean to outlaw plastic bags to use bags made of biodegradable materials which are earth-friendly.

"Plastic bags are made from petrochemicals, it is a non-renewable resource. Plastic bags are not biodegradable. A person's use of plastic bags may be counted in minutes, but plastic bags take between 15 years and 1,000 years to break down," Bichara said in a statement.

Under his proposed measure, shoppers will pay a P1.50 surcharge on every plastic bag they will use in supermarkets, groceries, service stations or outlets.

Collected funds will also be used to build an environmentally sound waste management and landfill system. Gillis B. Sabaverria

A.I.C.A.
THE ACADEMY FOR INTERNATIONAL CULINARY ARTS
Excitement on-going for this June 100 Batching



Diploma in International Culinary Arts and Professional Kitchen Management — June 10
Certificate in Commercial Cooking — June 10
Fundamentals in Professional Cooking — May 14
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NOTICE OF 37th ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY MADE that the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Inc. (AFPSLAI) will hold its 37th Annual Membership Meeting on 30 May 2009, Saturday at 8:00 AM at the Bulwagang Heneral Arturo T Enrile (AFP Museum and Multi-Purpose Theater), Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City for the purpose of electing the members of the Board of Trustees for the year 2009-2010 and to transact other business.

Registration starts at 8:00 AM and closes at exactly 8:00 AM.

(Sgd.) Atty. Samuel B. Padilla
Corporate Secretary

Republic of the Philippines
SENATE
Pasay City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Senate of the Philippines through its Bids and Awards Committee invites all duly-PhilGEPS registered bidder(s) to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following:

DESCRIPTION	QTY.	PROJECT ALLOCATION	GOVT. EST. COST/PRICE PER BID
1. Supply of materials for the replacement of acoustic ceiling: Metallic Furnishing of the Tabloid(s) 600 pcs. 'Base Track' c. 60cm x 1.20m Acoustic Ceiling Board Mineral Fiber, Kirei Patterned Aluminum Trimmings Thickness: 0.5mm x 3.0mm x 6m 4,000 pcs. 'Grid Runner' 600 pcs. 'H' Tee Wall Bolt	LOT	Php 500,000.00	Php 500.00
2. Supply and delivery of photo equipment and accessories:			
a) Two (2) units Full digital camera (body only) Two (2) units Flash Unit Two (2) units Zoom Telephoto, 80-70-300mm f/3.5-5.6 Lens Two (2) units Zoom Wide-80 Angle Telephoto, 24-105mm f/4L IS Lens	LOT	Php 750,000.00	Php 800.00
3. Supply and delivery of 40-caliber Pistol with the following: Auto Shotgun, Polycarb, with carbine pistol, auto-loader, shotgun	50 pieces	Php 2,500,000.00	Php 3,000.00

The bidding documents shall be available to interested bidder(s) upon payment at the Bids Secretariat Office, Rm. 601, 6/F Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City starting April 30, 2009 upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) and shall be submitted at the opening of bids at 10:00 a.m. at the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Administration and Finance, Rm. 606, Senate of the Philippines, Pasay City on the following dates:

NAME OF PROJECT	PRE-BIDDING CONFERENCE	SUBMISSION & OPENING OF BIDS
1. Supply of materials for acoustic ceiling boards	May 5, 2009 (Tue) 1, 10:00 AM	May 15, 2009 (Mon) 1, 10:00 AM
2. Supply and delivery of photo equipment & accessories	May 5, 2009 (Tue) 1, 11:00 AM	May 15, 2009 (Mon) 1, 10:00 AM
3. Supply and delivery of .40 caliber Pistol	May 5, 2009 (Tue) 1, 11:00 AM	May 15, 2009 (Mon) 1, 10:00 AM

All procurement relating to the eligibility, bid evaluation, and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 or Government Procurement Reform Act. Bids received in late, unless offered by reason of force majeure or fortuitous event or acts of God, shall be automatically LATE and shall not be accepted. Incomplete bids shall be rejected.

For inquiries, please call the BAC Secretariat Office at telefax no. 552-6601 local 4602 (Ms Rose Ann Castro).

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ALL BIDS OR ANY BID/PROPOSAL AT ANY TIME PRIOR TO CONTRACT AWARD WITHOUT THEREBY INCURRING ANY LIABILITY TO THE AFFECTED BIDDER OR BIDDERS, AND TO WAIVE ANY DEFECT IN FORM OR SUBSTANCE IN A BID, OR ANY AND ALL DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN, and/or TO ACCEPT THE BID/S MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT, BUT OF LESSER PRICE, AS DETERMINED BY THE BAC.

FURTHER, THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ASSUMES NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO COMPENSATE ANY BIDDER(S) OR BIDDER(S) INCURRED, AS THE SAME MAY BE, FOR ANY REVERSE OR LOSS THAT SAID BIDDER(S) MAY INCUR IN PARTICIPATING IN THE PROCUREMENT AND BIDDING PROCESS. HOW SOEVER IT CLAIMS TO BE THAT AN ERROR WILL BE MADE.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ARNEL JOSE D. SARAO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

Get 88 votes or shut up, party-list solons told

SHOW ME 88 SIGNATURES OR SHUT UP

Justice committee chair and Quezon City Rep. Matias Defensor yesterday challenged the party-list congressmen to get the one-third vote of the House of Representatives needed to impeach Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez and pave the way for her impeachment trial in the Senate.

Defensor had been sharply criticized by his militant colleagues for suspending the committee's first hearing Tuesday on the Gutierrez impeachment due to the lack of quorum.

Defensor claimed that since only 33 members were present, which was below the 58 needed to form a majority vote among the 115 members.

Defensor claimed an absolute majority was needed to determine whether the complaint filed by a group of civil society members led by former Senate President Jovito Salonga was sufficient in form and substance.

Amid the fierce opposition to his decision, Defensor made the challenge to his critics in the Ayes and Nays press conference.

Defensor figured that the minority block would have a more difficult time to take the one-third vote since, admits has increased from 77 to 80 after 28 new party-list representatives blasted the House membership to 266. GC, Cabacungan

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Robinsons Department Store

JOBapalooza '09: Biggest job fair on Labor Day

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) will celebrate Labor Day, May 1, with one of the biggest job fairs ever dubbed as "JOBapalooza '09" at the SM Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City.

The JOBapalooza '09 is spearheaded by the country's Labor Federations in tandem with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Tesda Play (TLC - Social Partners). The nationwide fair would make available to new graduates and jobseekers hundreds of thousands of job opportunities from more than 1,000 employers.

The JOBapalooza '09 will open at the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City.

Labor Secretary Marianito D. Roque said the JOBapalooza '09 is a collective offering of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW), Philippine Transport and General Workers Organization-PTGWO, All Workers Alliance Trade Union (AWATU), Trade Union of the Philippines and Allied Services (TUPAS), Alliance of Filipino Workers (AFW), Philippine Organization of Labor Unions (POLU), and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), and the DOLE.

Mobile Caravans

The JOBapalooza '09 is complemented by Mobile Caravans in Metro Manila and provincial regional areas prior to the May 1 celebrations. The DOLE-sponsored Mobile Caravans' chief mission is to reach out to and bring to the barangay level the online registration of graduates and jobseekers, in order to assist them in finding their chosen productive jobs.

Mobile Caravan Stops are at the following venues: Manila City Hall and San Andres Sports Complex, San Andres cor. Odiong St., Malate, Manila (April 13); Barangay Hall 183, Villamor Air Base and Mullikas, Pasay City (April 15); Lakandula High School, Cagalingan, Tondo, and Tondo Sports Complex, Manila (April 18); Roces, Ricardo N. cor. Antonio, Kiko Ave., Manila, and Pasay City Hall (April 22); Calamba City Hall and Mabalon City Hall (April 23); Quezon City Municipal Hall and SSS Regional Office, Cagayan de Oro City (April 24); Baguio - DOLE Regional Office (April 27); Tuguegarao Sports Complex, Immaculate B., Tuguegarao, Mandaluyong City Hall and Mandaluyong City Hall (April 28, 2009).

Alay sa Manggagawang Pilipino Concert

To cap the JOBapalooza '09, superstar Pinoy entertainers will showcase the best of Filipino artistry in a Pilipino tribute to the country's 37.1 million Labor force and the globally acclaimed, 8-million-strong overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in more than 190 host destinations worldwide, in a night with music and entertainment dubbed as "Alay sa Manggagawang Pilipino Concert" featuring Mr. Pure Energy, Gary Valenciano, and Boomerang.

The activity will commence with an Initial Trade Union Concert followed by the launch of the Hotel Sea featuring Award Pinoy entertainers Bet Digi Alejandro and Rachel Alejandro, among others.

PROGRAMME

Messages

I join the Filipino nation in celebrating this year's **Labor Day**, a day that is intended and close to the hearts of many Filipinos.

It is heartening to note that both labor and management and other sectors are joining hands with government in surmounting the challenges posed by the global financial crisis.

Thus, the celebration of Labor Day, or LDAY, with the theme, "Trabaho Na! Yes a disaster-and-relief coordinating mechanism to cushion the fall of the unemployed from the ranks of the labor force, the government and its social partners, nothing is impossible. I particularly laud labor and management for actively complementing the thrusts of the government in keeping our economic resilience, in boosting and facilitating opportunities for growth, and in maintaining industrial harmony despite the turbulence ashore.

Indeed, the culture of excellence that our seafarers have instilled, whether they are working at home or in more than 190 host destinations worldwide, is our best assurance that we will be able to weather the crisis.

I also congratulate the men and women of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for making the necessary services and programs for the welfare of our workers.

Mabuhay ang Manggagawang Pilipino!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

On this day, I join the rest of the nation in paying tribute to all Filipino working men and women here and abroad.

Today, we honor them for the strength and perseverance they continue to manifest despite the major economic challenges which the whole world is experiencing. We also laud their valuable contribution to our country's economic growth, and the lasting and significant role they have played in the development of our time-honored excellence and world-class managerial and technical skills.

On the occasion of Labor Day, our fervent concern is more so manifest "Maramong Trabaho". We express our collective gratitude to the Filipino working men and women through our efforts to ensure that their working environment lives and abroad conform to high standards of health and safety, and that they are compensated the most productive rates in ways that are fair and just.

Our government is also doing its best to improve and expand programs to help our working men and women over the horizon of their projects. It is also our hope that more entrepreneurial opportunities can be created to enable those who have returned to their homes and who want to apply for livelihood projects that would help them build a more stable future.

I thank and congratulate the **Department of Labor and Employment** for its own efforts to better the lives of Filipino working men and women. The Department is ideally for this Labor Day celebration. "Trabaho Na!" is, indeed, a manifestation of its active and utmost dedication to the welfare and well-being of our working men and women.

MABUHAY!

BENIGNO S. AQUINO III
President
Republic of the Philippines

Mahigpit kong hinahan ng isang manunulbaking mga ng Pagpasa ang lahat ng mga kababayan kong manggagawa sa ating bansa.

Ang araw na ito ay isang mahalagang araw dahil ito'y hinahan ibang araw ng pagpapasalamat at pagkilala sa inyong lahat sa walang sawang pagsisikap ang inyong ipinamalas sa pagtatrabaho sa ating ekonomiya at ng kahusayan ng ating lahing Pilipino. Sa patuloy na pagsisikap ng ating ekonomiya at ng kahusayan ng ating lahing Pilipino. Sa patuloy na pagsisikap, pagtutulungan, at pagmimisa nakasalalay ng bawat isang pagasang Pilipino at mangin ang ating lahing.

Dahil dito, nais kong pasalamatan kayo sa araw na ito sa patuloy niyong pakikilahok sa hamon ng ating panahon, ang mapagtagumpayan ang ating bansa at ahunsiyan mo. Nito mong mapuri sa ahunsiyan ng ating mga gawain at gawain ang bawat isa mong kasiyahan at ng lahat ng mamamayan. Bilang ang ating mangagawa, nakasalalay sa ang inyong mga tinuring, sakdilo ay ang inyong mga pagsisikap, at hindi mawawalan ng pagkain ng inyong mga pangarap kung sa inyong inaasahan ng kinabukasan.

Kaya ikaw ng pambansang pagdiriwang ng araw ng Pagpasa sa "Tayo Na, Trabaho Na, JOBapalooza '09." Angkop ang tinuring na sa isahan ng isang pambansang sa pagtatagumpay ng Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Ito ay pagpapakita ang na ito. Ibinig nakita sa ating mga kakayahan. Sa gobyerno ito ay mga unahap ng the government to alleviate negative poverty.

Dahil dito, inaatasan ko kayong lahat na magtulong ang isa't isa. Ngayon ay panahonngahan ng pag-alay ng pagmamahal sa kapwa kababayang lubaks. Ang kanilan lalo na sa gitna ng pinagdaanang krisis para ako ang mga mga mga

SA PAGGUNITA NG LABOR DAY

Pag-IBIG para sa mga Manggagawa

- ✓ Muling pagbaba ng interest rate
- ✓ Loan Restructuring at Penalty Condonation
- ✓ Special STL para sa nawalan ng trabaho
- ✓ Iskolar ng Pag-IBIG

Mas pinababang interest rate ng Housing Loan

LOAN AMOUNT	old INTEREST RATE	new INTEREST RATE	MONTHLY AMORTIZATION for OLD RATE	MONTHLY AMORTIZATION for NEW RATE
₱ 400,000	7%	6%	P2,661.21	P2,398.20
P 750,000	7%	7%	P4,989.77	P4,989.77
₱ 1,000,000	10.5%	8.5%	P9,147.39	P7,689.13
₱ 1,250,000	10.5%	9.5%	P11,434.24	P10,510.68
P 2,000,000	10.5%	10.5%	P18,294.79	P18,294.79
₱ 3,000,000 (new loan package)	Not applicable	11.5%	Not applicable	P29,708.74

Pag-asa para sa housing loan borrowers na merong arrears

Loan Restructuring at Penalty Condonation

- ☐ *Programa para sa mga housing loan borrowers na hindi nakapagbayad ng amortisasyon nang tatlong buwan o mahigit*
- ☐ *Buburahin na ang mga naipong penalties mula sa mga hindi nabayarang amortisasyon*
- ☐ *Mawawalang i-condone ang bahagi ng naipong interes*
- ☐ *Ang nadidiskuwentong interes ay huhulugi-hulugan sa kabuuang payment period ng na-restructure na utang nang walang anumang interes.*
- ☐ *Ang restructured loan ay papatawan lamang ng interest rate na hindi hihigit sa rate ng orihinal na loan, o 12%, alinman sa dalawa ang mas mababa.*
- ☐ *Maaaring pahabain ang pagbabayad ng utang nang hanggang 30 taon mula sa pagkaka-aprubba ng restructuring, basta't hindi lalampas sa ika-70 taong gulang ng may utang*
- ☐ *Walang babayaranng processing fee at downpayment.*

Special Short Term Loan for Displaced Workers

Pantawid-krisis sa manggagawang nawalan ng trabaho

- ☐ *Para sa mga nawalan ng trabaho dahil sa pagkasara ng kompanya at retrenchment/lay-off*
- ☐ *Bukas sa mga miyembrong may hindi bababa sa 24 buwanang kontribusyon*
- ☐ *Babayaran sa loob ng tatlong taon, kasama ang isang taong grace period*
- ☐ *Madali lamang i-avail—kailangan lang ng kumpletong MPL application form at katunayan ng pagkakaalis sa trabaho*
- ☐ *Kumbinyente, dahil maaaring i-deposito ang loan proceeds sa bank account ng miyembro*
- ☐ *Maaaring bayaran nang hulugan direkta sa Pag-IBIG, sa mga awtorisadong collecting agents at bangko, o di kaya ay sa pamamagitan ng employer kapag nagka-trabaho na ang miyembro*

Libreng edukasyon para sa mas magandang kinabukasan

Iskolar ng Pag-IBIG Program

- ☐ *Bukas sa Pag-IBIG members na aktibo ng dalawang taon patuas at kanilang mince legal dependents na tayos ng high school*
- ☐ *May kabuuang 150 scholarships na igagawad sa buong bansa—50 para sa kukuha ng degree, at 100 para sa kukuha ng vocational courses.*
- ☐ *May kabuuang benepisyo na hanggang P60,000 sa degree course kada taon at P30,000 sa vocational courses kada kurso sa bawat iskolar, kasama ang P10,000 na allowance*
- ☐ *Para sa mga estudyanteng may average na markang 85% pataas sa kaapat na taon ng high school, kabilang sa Top 20 ng mga magtatapos na estudyante sa kanyang paaralan; at hindi hihigit sa P250,000 ang annual gross income ng pamilya*
- ☐ *Mula sa mga kwalipikadong aplikante ay pipiliin ang mga iskolar sa pamamagitan ng lottery.*

Tawag na sa **811-4230** at
724-4244 (Pag-IBIG).
E-mail kayo sa **www.pagibigfund.gov.ph**

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Application forms are available at all GSIS offices nationwide, and are also downloadable from www.gsis.gov.ph. Application period is from February 9 to April 14, 2009. The electronic raffle draw is EXTENDED UP TO APRIL 30, 2009

For more information, please call Emma, Amie, or Jesse at 9764970 or visit www.gsis.gov.ph.

GSIS

PIRACY IN SOMALIA

19 RP sailors freed; 15 seized

By Cynthia D. Balana

A MARSHALL ISLANDS-flagged cargo ship with 19 Filipinos among its 22 crew was freed by Somali pirates on April 23 but 15 other Filipinos were taken hostage with the captive of a German-owned ship on the same day, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) confirmed yesterday.

DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya said the MV Safidarba was freed after two months in captivity. It was seized by pirates in the Gulf of Aden last February 22 while carrying coal from Mozambique to Australia to Slovenia.

It had a total of 22 crewmen, including one Ukrainian and one Indian.

On the other hand, the MV Beluga, owned by Germany's Beluga Schiffahrt GmbH and registered in Malta, was on its way to the port of Mombasa on Kenya during the coast of central Somalia when intercepted by pirates.

Malaya said the government was coordinating with the two ships' respective manning agencies, their owners and concerned foreign governments for the repatriation of the freed Filipinos seafarers and the release of those still in captivity.

DFA said it did not know whether or not ransom had been paid for the release of the Safidarba ship and crew.

On April 21, pirates had also released the Philippine-flagged MV Irene Emerald and its 23 Filipino crew members after about five months in captivity.

The pirates are still holding MV Titan, which was hijacked late March 19 with 17 Filipinos; Sinpaya, hijacked late March 20 with 18 Filipinos; Winifar 161, hijacked last April 6 with 17 Filipinos; Malaspina Castle, hijacked last April 8 with 4 Filipinos; and MV Iowa, hijacked last April 15 with 22 Filipinos.

Together with the 15 seamen on the Patriot, this adds up to 93 Filipinos still held hostage by Somali pirates.

Somalia has not had a functioning government since 1991 and foreign vessels are frequently seized for ransoms by pirates armed with rocket-propelled grenade launchers and automatic weapons.

In June, the United Nations Security Council voted to allow international warships to enter Somali waters to combat the problem.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Esteban B. Conejos, Jr. said manning agencies of ships plying the pirate-infested Gulf of Aden have been asked to follow the guidance of the International Maritime Bureau to stay at least 200 nautical miles off the 3,300-kilometer coastline of Somalia.

PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. [illegible]

BIDDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF 4 UNLOAD SETS OF PHILHEALTH OFFICIAL RECEIPT (OR)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), through the [illegible] intends to apply the sum of PHP 4,000,000.00 as the approved budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract to the Bidding for the Procurement of 4,100,000 Sets of PhilHealth Official Receipt (OR); Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites duly pre-eligible bidders, including joint ventures, for the said procurement with the following specifications:

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS:

QUANTITY: 4,100,000 sets / 4,100 boxes
SIZE: Vertical Length - 8 inches; Horizontal Length - 5 inches
MATERIAL: Carbonized Carbonless Paper (approximate stock for short up to five feet set)

Note:
Actual quality of the paper stock to be bid per should be exactly the same as the attached sample copies

1st Ply: White Carbonless Paper (FOR BIR'S COPY)
2nd Ply: Green Carbonless Paper (COMPTROLLER'S/AUDIT OFFICER'S COPY)
3rd Ply: Pink Carbonless Paper (CASHIER'S COPY)
*Any color may be used for 4th Ply
With back to back numbering order
With serial no. perforation

Note:
Preferred stock should be evenly perforated/aligned

PRINTING: Typeset / Offset
SERIAL NOS.: Pre-numbered (8 digits)
All Numbers, Except Numbering
4,100,000 sets (4,000,000 - 00,000,000)
[illegible]: Actual Specimens must be printed on two (2) opposite sides of the box
1,000 sets / box
OTHERS: PhilHealth logo printed in UV ink at the center
Word print "PHILHEALTH" on the top of the word (Amount in words)

Note:
PhilHealth logo should be based on the standard corporate identity manual

All items shall be delivered to the PhilHealth warehouse, Filing Warehouse and Delivery Section, Philhealth Supply Section, Rm. 2107, 10th St. Citystate Center, Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City.

SCHEDULE OF DELIVERIES:

Schedule of Delivery	Boxes	Sets	Delivery Mode: Minimum / Max	Delivery Date
1st	800,000	800	1,000,000 - 2,000,000	15 days after notice of award
2nd	800,000	800	1,000,000 - 2,000,000	15 days after the 1st delivery
3rd	800,000	800	1,000,000 - 2,000,000	15 days after the 2nd delivery
4th	800,000	800	1,000,000 - 2,000,000	15 days after the 3rd delivery
5th	800,000	800	1,000,000 - 2,000,000	15 days after the 4th delivery

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pre-bid criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for R.A.9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to associations or cooperatives of its members, the laws of organization of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 7721 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only PhilHealth Bidders who meet the eligibility criteria will be issued. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall be required to submit the post qualification documents as stated in the Bidding Documents. Implementation of the bid is the exclusive and financial responsibility. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who would be determined to meet with the post qualification requirements.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the **Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC)** at the Head Office at PhilHealth Grand Total 1000 Tower, City Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, and inspect the Bidding Documents from **8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents should be purchased by interested bidders from **April 16 - May 1, 2009** at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **PHP 1,000.00**. Bidders may also download the Bidding Documents from the PhilHealth website provided that the bidder shall pay the applicable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the Bidding Documents previously.

PhilHealth will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **May 6, 2009** at **10:30 a.m.** at the **SBAC Conference Room** (Rm. 1002, PhilHealth Head Office, 10th floor Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City).

Bid proposals must be delivered to the **SBAC Conference Room** on or before **May 11, 2009, 10:30 a.m.** The bidder who would be present on the said date located in the SBAC Conference Room. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on May 11, 2009, 10:30 a.m. at the **SBAC Conference Room**. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

[illegible] 2009 to [illegible] 2009 is the relevant period for comment which will be required by PhilHealth to be submitted.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the Bidding process, and to reject at any time any Bid without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

[illegible]
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services

MEMORY LAPSE?

Party-list solons hit back at Joker

By Lolit B. Salvosa

A CASE OF MEMORY LAPSE OR just ignoring the obvious?

Militant party-list groups yesterday slammed Sen. Jinkoy Arroyo for blaming them for promotions given to Armed Forces of the Philippines, saying the senator appeared to have forgotten that they had blocked the appointments of the controversial retirement general nominees to the past, only to be thwarted by administration allies.

Arroyo had said that those opposing Palparan failed to convince their colleagues in the Commission of Appointments (CA) not to vote for the military officer's promotion. The CA is composed of lawmakers from the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Rep. Teodoro Casiño, of the party-list group Bayan Muna, said Arroyo appeared to have forgotten what groups like his did to register their opposition to Palparan, now the representative of the party-list group Bantay.

Short memory

Palparan had been called a "berdugo" for allegedly leaving behind a trail of dead activists in areas where he was assigned as a military officer. He consistently denied the allegations.

Joker's memory is one short and his statements are irresponsible. All he had to do was check the CA records to show we had consistently opposed Palparan's promotion to the AFP's top echelons in Bayan Muna, Reps. Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza, even nominated the berdugo to testify and lobby against Palparan," Casiño added.

The congressman added that Arroyo seemed to have turned a blind eye to the fact that the CA had done Malacañang's bidding. "Joker ignores the obvious. the CA bowed to GMA's wishes and were too let frustrated by the AFP on disapproved Palparan's promotion," he said.

Ocampo, who is also Bayan Muna's Minority Leader, pointed out that they had not only been consistent in trying to oppose Palparan's promotion, but consistent to question his brutal position, that of party list lawmakers.

"Records of Congress, the Senate, the Ombudsman and the CA will show that we have worked hard to investigate the extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. We have blocked Palparan's promotions since 2006," he said in a statement.

Major injustice

Bayan Muni also joined the move in disqualify Palparan as a party list representative, saying the retired general does not belong to a marginalized or underrepresented sector and urged the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal to grant the petition.

"We thus call on the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal to take on the golden opportunity to correct the major injustice of the CA by acting on the quo warranto case versus Palparan," Ocampo said.

Meanwhile, the House is expected to continue its investigation of Palparan's alleged human rights abuses when he was still in active military service. The House Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability yesterday declared Palparan in contempt for his refusal to appear before the House Committee on Human Rights a resolution opposing Palparan's appointment to any public position.

The resolution was filed in February after rumors of his appointment as the Philippine Ambassador to Bahrain Agency cropped up.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 02, 2009
3rd Week of Easter
Year I

1st Reading: Acts 9:26-31
Gospel: Jn 6:44-51

Jesus said to the crowds, "No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise him up on the last day. It has been written in the Prophets: They shall all be taught by God. So whoever listens and learns from the Father comes to me.

"Not as if anyone has seen the Father except the One who comes from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

"I am the bread of life. Though your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, they died. But here you have the bread which comes from heaven, so that anyone may eat it and not die.

"I am the living bread which has come from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever. The bread I shall give is my flesh and I will give it for the life of the world."

Commentary:

Let us not be weighed until we are confirmed in our faith, as the Athanasian says, by diligently studying the teachings of Christ. We should strive to do good to all Christ, with whom we come into company at an event through life, do as those, of whom we hear nothing else, we know also they all have saved. When those who require other salvation and believe in Christ and his Church and his gospel, they will also go on their way rejoicing. Their hearts will be filled with love and hope in the resurrection of Christ. May Christ grant that every one of us will go on our way, rejoicing together!

(Sermons Commentaries and Homilies, Inc., Publication by Fr. Gilbert Adriano, Quezon City, 1993) Rev. Fr. Gilbert Adriano, Quezon City, 1993) Rev. Fr. Gilbert Adriano, Quezon City, 1993) Rev.

Solons told: Cha-cha, not Pacman, is bigger fight

LAWMAKERS LEAVING the country in search Manny Pacquiao fight with Ricky Hatton had better be prepared for a fight when they return, according to the chair of the House committee on good government and public accountability.

Camiguin Rep. Pedro Romualdo said the fight awaiting the lawmakers would be the Charter change debates, which he said are actually more important than Pacquiao's match.

He said that while he is very proud of Pacquiao, Charter change would affect the country and every individual Filipino.

"After the fight, please let's have all to a fight in the senate hall and that fight is debating Charter change," he told the boxers.

"Let's also give importance to debate. Anyway, it's only debating. If we do not approve it, that's okay but please debate it rather than viewing a fight because that's not what the country needs although we are proud of Manny Pacquiao. I am proud of Pacquiao," he added. Lorilei Salcedo/TEA

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PHOENIX

Defensor: No turning back in perjury case vs Lozada

By Nancy Carvajal

FLANKED BY HIS WIFE AND children, former Presidential Chief of Staff Mike Defensor said yesterday that he would pursue the perjury case he filed against NBN-ZTE whistle blower Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada.

Defensor said he was willing to go all the way to the Supreme Court to clear his name, noting Lozada would amend his statement in the Court of Appeals.

"I am not withdrawing the case against Jun. I have called this press conference to explain what the case is all about because it's again going back to the ZTE deal," Defensor told the reporters before the start of the press briefing at a restaurant in Quezon City.

However, he said he would drop the case if Lozada, who is in self-imposed hibernation in the United States, would admit that he lied when he testified before the controversy-ridden contract in the Philippines from Hong Kong in February 2008.

"He'll just amend his statement and we're done. But if he would not, I am willing to bring this all the way to the Supreme Court," Defensor said.

Last March, Defensor filed a complaint for perjury against Lozada before the Quezon City prosecutor's office.

Calls from Malacañang

Fearing repercussions of the case on the administration, Sen. Gringo Honasan II called up Defensor last March to inquire about the case, according to a source privy to the conversation.

Gringo Honasan is the younger brother of Defensor's wife, Lisa.

Honasan is the younger brother of Defensor's wife, Lisa.

Defensor said he was also summoned to Malacañang by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs Raul Lambino.

Although he does not name Lozada's co-pinoi, he is not withdrawing the perjury case for the sake of his family, Defensor said.

"I reiterate that I don't want Lozada jailed. He only learned to lie. I want him to tell the truth," he said.

Defensor said he was willing to withdraw the case if Lozada would admit that he lied in his testimony before the House committee on public accounts.

"I'll withdraw the case if he admits that he lied. I'll withdraw the case if he admits that he lied

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2009

Only ₱400 per semester? CAP explains

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE COLLEGE ASSURANCE PLAN HAS paid nearly 30 times in tuition and other benefits when a disgruntled plan holder invested in its pioneering education plans two decades ago.

CAP issued the clarification in response to a claim made by Gloria C. Batin, head of a group of disgruntled CAP plan holders, who testified in a House committee current, giving the collapse of pension companies on Monday that she has only received P600 in benefits for one semester since CAP went into rehabilitation in 2006.

CAP revealed that Batin purchased in March 1987 a plan for consecutive private school for her daughter which cost P13,268 and paid over five years.

Batin's daughter started availing herself of the college plan in 2003 and she had been granted a total of P82,394 for seven semesters until 2005.

CAP stressed that it owed Batin a total of only P6,287 for her daughter's education of which P800.75 was paid on Sept. 20, 2007 with the balance now available for her withdrawal.

CAP said that this means that Batin would have obtained a total of P102,695 in benefits with P99,693.87 in education benefits and the return of her initial investment of P13,200.

"CAP is happy to have assisted another scholar in getting her education. All of Batin's efforts will now allow her daughter to graduate," said CAP Executive Vice President Bobby Cain.

Cain explained that the court-approved rehabilitation plan stipulated 20 quarterly installments for those with claims filed before school year 2006-2007—₱825 per quarter for exclusive school plan holders; ₱600 per quarter for nonexclusives; and ₱2,000 per quarter for non-college-and-universities. Payments for school year 2006-2007 and onwards will be given in two annual installments—₱9,075.50 for exclusive, ₱6,592 for nonexclusive, and ₱7,259 for state colleges and universities.

Full payments per semester will be given instead of installments beginning school year 2012-2013 and onwards—₱18,759 for exclusive, ₱13,581 for nonexclusive, and ₱14,948 for state colleges and universities.

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The Department of Health has ranked diabetes as the ninth leading cause of death in the country, affecting 1 out of 25 Filipinos. DOH defines diabetes as a "serious chronic metabolic disease characterized by an increase in blood sugar levels associated with long-term damage and failure of organ functions, especially the eyes, the kidneys, the nerves, the heart and blood vessels."

It occurs when insulin is not adequately produced by the pancreas. It also happens when the body cannot properly use insulin–the hormone necessary for the proper utilization of sugar by muscles, fat and liver. Untreated diabetes results in increased sugar in your blood as glucose cannot get into your cells. This could lead to complications such as heart problem, stroke, kidney damage, or even erectile dysfunction for men. At risk of diabetes are those whose parents are diabetics themselves, who are obese, hypertensive, with extremely high cholesterol levels and who lead sedentary lives. Among the symptoms of diabetes are: excessive thirst, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, slow-healing sores, and blurred vision.

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- Do not skip or delay meals to avoid fluctuations in blood sugar levels.
- Reduce your salt and fat intake.

Live a Healthy Lifestyle

- If you are overweight, start weight reduction through diet and exercise.
- Exercise at least three times a week for a minimum of 30 minutes per session. Always bring candy or soft drink to avoid hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) during and after exercise.
- Do not smoke.
- Limit your alcohol intake.

Consult and Follow Your Doctor's Advice

- See your doctor for advice and management.
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OPINION

Brunei beauty

FOR A GOVERNMENT THAT INSISTS, MANICALLY, even ruinously, on the presumption of regularity, the Arroyo administration is certainly addicted to the irregular practice of politics. Consider the curious case of the country's newest Brunei beauty: Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Alexander Yano.

Tomorrow, Yano will be "relinquishing his post," in the curious, because unusual, language of Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro. The relinquishing narrows it itself a subject of curiosity, because it comes 44 days before Yano's original retirement date. Under an administration that thinks nothing of appointing a chief of staff to a three-month term, six weeks is no trivial matter.

The circumstances that lead up to tomorrow's ceremony make up a curious set-up, too: Early this month, Teodoro announced that Lt. Gen. Victor Ibrado, the Army's commanding officer, will succeed Yano as the country's top general. In turn, Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit, commanding general of the Southern Luzon Command and one of President Macapagal-Arroyo's most trusted officers, will succeed Ibrado at the Army, by far the largest service in the AFP. (These new appointments, as the Inquirer's front-page story emphasized, would place Bangit in the best position to succeed Ibrado as chief of staff, when he retires before the May 2010 elections.)

The new appointees were named in a curiously early time; curious, because the nominations had the (ironically?) effect of turning Yano, by all accounts a professional soldier of proven integrity into a lame duck. One of the lesson's military tourists read, unsurprisingly: "When his replacement was announced earlier than expected, projects, plans and documents [would] not be pushed to his other assistant since people will now consider the interest of the incoming commander."

But that's the Arroyo administration for you: professionalism at work is regarded with displeasure, and rewarded with an early exit, or worse.

It is of course also possible that Ibrado's return represents a compromise between Teodoro, the nephew of fellow Cagayan de Oro native Jr. with his own independent base of political power, and the President. Remember that Bangit had long been rumored to head the short list of Yano's successors. Nothing certainly prevented the commander in chief from promoting her favorite to four-star general. Even the expected grumbling from older generals would have been easily contained. Perhaps Teodoro stood his ground. By the same token, it is also possible that Teodoro himself effected the changes, as proof that he is aligned with the President's political objectives, and would therefore be in the best position to run as the administration's presidential candidate.)

Even more curious, however, was Teodoro's announcements of the new assignments of Yano and the AFP's second-in-command, Vice-Chief of Staff Cardozo Luna, who is also retiring early. Teodoro announced that Luna would be the new ambassador to The Hague and Yano the new ambassador to Brunei.

Despite what Press Secretary Cerge Remonde described as the participation of Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo in the process, and despite what Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Ed Malaya called consultations, DFA officials were stunned by the curious appointments.

In the first place, ambassadorial appointments are traditionally announced by Malacañang (and the recall of diplomats by the DFA). Teodoro's announcements was a breach of protocol.

Secondly, the double-barreled resort to diplomatic postings as a convenient way to sideline officials in other government units was a breach of tradition. Other soldiers have certainly done the country proud after they were named as diplomats, but the sideline, in one swoop, of two new ambassadors from the AFP turns the foreign service's tradition of maintaining a pool of career diplomats on its head.

Last, the many irregularities in the obviously well-organized campaign to sideline Yano constitute a breach of trust. The Arroyo administration has acted, not in the public's best interest, but self-servingly. How can it be in the public interest to hobble a chief of staff with lame-duck status, when the kidnapping scourge in Basilan and Sulu remains a threat and when peace negotiations with the Moro separatists hang in the balance? Not even the presumption of regularity can hide the stench of this administration's many irregularities.

EDITORIAL

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Scapegoats

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"A GOOD SCAPEGOAT IS NEARLY AS WELCOME as a solution to a problem."

That union rather fits the excuse that National Economic and Development Authority's Ralph Recto peddled: "As a result of the global financial crisis," the Socio-Economic general said, "it is possible ... Philippine compliance with Millennium Development Goals would be delayed."

So, sir. It's not only possible. It is a done deal: easily 5 million crucial MDG targets such as maternal death rates, schooling or eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. Converting the world economy into a steppe isn't truth.

The Philippines and 188 other nations pledged to meet eight MDGs by 2015. That's only six years away.

These are "benchmarks for assessing progress ... in creating decent jobs, improving access to schools and ensuring core surpluses," the UN's Human Development Report notes. "They enable poor people to hold political leaders accountable."

Take Goal No. 3: "But committed as to their numbers, death rates, by three months. In every 100,000 births here, 162 Filipina mothers die," compare that to 62 for Malaysians). We vowed to reduce maternal deaths to 55.

We are wrinkling on that pledge. Heroic resolve on the daily outlay. Have are pregnancy-related deaths. Health budgets remain miserable. Abortion is a "deeply subsidized by hard" to come by mostly planning services. Underground abortionists account for nearly 1.2 percent of maternal deaths.

The UP Population Institute estimates 360,000 abortions are induced yearly, more 90,000 mothers, likely to reach the five highest, with post-abortion care, DOH and Commission on Population estimates. Almost half of the 3.4 million pregnancies in 2008 were unintended.

"Reduced maternal deaths is the MDG least likely to be achieved by 2015," the Inter-Peace. "Women should view pregnancy and childbirth as something to celebrate, not to fear."

Not to worry. Recto continues. Government will still meet missed MDG targets. He refused to say when. It'd be "hard to put a number on how much would be lost in terms of not meeting the target."

That's the easy. Recto can't "put a number" on thousands of mothers who will die in premature graves when his database come home to roost, if ever.

But don't Recto & Co. see the obvious injustice? This government handedly P726 million to politicians' pork and only P109 million to local health projects. Has it change on "health budgets, sanitation, nutrition and other unmet human needs. "In the absence of justice, what is sovereignty but organized robbery?" St. Augustine asked.

Then needs to taxes are dissipated. Congress' pork barrel is notorious. Internal Revenue Allotments make up 64 centavos of every peso in local government budgets...up from 39 centavos a decade back. But no performance criteria are required. The funds is burned on bonuses, lobby-travel junkets, prestige bikes, cars, etc.

"We're allocating resources, particularly for the important areas in terms more in hard and human infrastructure," Recto countered. The administration would tap all types of financing, whether from China, Japan, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund or Asian Development Bank, to finance the public investment program.

Is ish the project. Is that making international bodies scapegoats for domestic failure?

"Expenditures for social and economic services as a percentage of the total budget had been declining for the past seven years," notes the eminently frank 2007 MDG Midterm Progress Report. "The funding gap to achieve the goals by 2015 is estimated at around $3.6 billion."

Can this funding gap be narrowed? Yes, but we must abolish fiduciary congressional pork barrels, untangle the skewed tax system, etc. We don't outside the economic distortions and human pain that stems from corruption and bad government. Harvard professor John Kenneth Galbraith once said.

Look at MDG Goal No. 2: "To ensure by 2015 that children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling."

We have been at back here, too. Net enrollment in elementary education rose elsewhere 100 per cent in 2000. By school year 2005-2006, this slumped to 84 percent. It hasn't bounced back.

MDG Goal 1 would test the proportion of people who average by on less than P49 a day. Social Weather Stations notes that even the last five years the number of poor people stagnated. A population that will count at 103 million by 2015 makes this MDG goal elusive.

Some of the Asian and Pacific countries, certainly not the Philippines, is on track to meet all the goals by 2015. Social Watch concludes that we are slipping further behind, along with Indonesia, Bangladesh and Laos.

"The development process and outcomes have are vulnerable to elite capture," Oxfam-sponsor study notes. If governments that budgets more for paying SSS than for poverty reduction, education, health, and ecology protection can't deliver on its MDG commitments.

Government must change the way it governs. "People have a very deep mistrust of government. They want to see meaningful changes where services really work for the poor. And they want to have a real say in how that's going to be done."

That future is within reach," Social Watch says. But it will require "profound renewal."

Those are really suggestions for our libraries," Mark Twain once said. "But the moneyguy does not overwhelm me."

Read more guest columns and write to them at opinion@inquirer.com.ph

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Noel

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ONE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS official was pissed off about the appointment of the retiring AFP chief of staff as ambassador to Brunei. "The administration should stop treating the foreign service as a joke resorts," he said. "They should not be looking at the foreign service and ambassadorships positions like a Christmas tree from which to pluck luscious rewards for political support. It's presumptuous for the military to make these recommendations. It reflects a certain mind frame."

Not to belabor any the same thing, "why a the DFA being treated as a dumping ground for otherwise excellent military officers who virtually have no credentials for foreign service except their closeness to Malacañang? It's a national shame because it brings discredit not only to the DFA but also to the whole country." What is this, "You make the new announcement today! If there's an exception from the receiving country. Otherwise, you're pushing the receiving country on the spot."

An excellent point in other circumstances, it misses the target by a mile here. The injustice here is not in the DFA, it is in the military. The injustice here is not to Alberto Romulo, it is to Alexander Yano.

It's not as if Yano was retiring after he had reached the mandatory age and can finally put a chance to his military past unreferred by the thought that his accomplishments are fully appreciated by his boss. It's not as if Yano had been angling for Brunei for some time now and had finally been given the plum post as reward for being close to Malacañang. It's not as if Yano was related about what was happening to him.

Yano in fact has been treated rather pointedly shabbily. He is not being promoted, he is being eased out. Well before his retirement age, on June 13, the day after Philippine Independence, he is being hived unwillingly from his post.

This is the first time in recent years a chief of staff has been eased off in this way. Of course, Yano has handed in his resignation; he has no choice. The announcement by Gilberto Teodoro Jr. of his successor, Victor Ibrado, a move also without precedent in recent years, leaves him to, if with injury to insult, making him a lame duck in the military community quite apart from the civilian bureaucracy.

A hair like this is normally received by the abysmally corrupt and incompetent. But this is not a normal country, this is not a normal government. This is happening to Dina because he is, in the eyes of Malacañang, abysmally honest and professional.

Who is Alexander Yano? He is one of the few chiefs of staff in recent years who have commanded the respect of the rank and file. He is one of the few chiefs of staff who have not been mired in corruption charges. Indeed, he is the one who has taken the effort, however frustrating, to curb corruption in an institution where the devious expect to be promoted and the honest count rusticated. He is the one who has vowed to obey the Constitution to the letter, sporadically by putting down any effort to oust his commander in chief before the end of his term and by putting down any effort by this government—not least by his commander in chief, though of course he has never said that part explicitly—seeking to preserve just its term.

That makes him a completely unreliable chief of the Armed Forces. That makes him a most dangerous chief of the Armed Forces. Particularly at this time when the term of his commander in chief (which never really began, it was merely imposed) is drawing to a close.

The point of assigning Yano ambassador to Brunei is not to make the Dina Ambassador-able—while at that, why shouldn't Yano be qualified for diplomatic service when he is one of very few public officials, never mind ambassadors, who can still distinguish what is good for the country and what is good only for the creature who claims to lead it?—it is to make its Filipino miserable. It is not to pave the way for Yano. It is to pave the way for Bangit.

The plot is to have Delfin Bangit in place as chief of staff by March next year when Ibrado himself will retire. Bangit's foremost qualification is the same foremost qualification Arroyo named Marcos head in Bataan: Yes, the capacity to say when ordered to jump from a building, "Which floor, sir?" Or in that case, "Which flesh, Ma'am?" Bangit's commander in chief sees something before the elections and there will be no time to stop her. Keep your friends close and your enemies—in prison.

Jovito Palparan is already in place as a congressman in the mansion of wealth in Commonwealth Avenue, which is bigger than the one in Bicutan. Hermogenes Esperon is already in place as chief peace negotiator, in which capacity he has been busy stirring up war in Mindanao. Eduardo Ermita remains in place as executive secretary. With Bangit's prospective appointment as AFP chief of staff a couple of months before the elections, you have to seriously ask: Will elections really take place?

Gloria Ming tells you, he has been fired says otherwise. He might as well say about the electorate. "Bat? Yes."

Al Gore had an interesting analogy in "An Inconvenient Truth." You put a frog in a pot of boiling water, and he'll jump out of it wildly. You put the same frog in a pitcher of water and boil it slowly, and it will stay there until it becomes frog's legs. What to come about the environment, the ravaging of this planet is true about the political ravaging of this country. GMA engineers over and low and we'll all jump wildly. She fires here and bites there, she punishes decency here and rewards venomous there, and we won't notice we've already become frog's legs.

But while it that, Palparan's hitting and Bunot's firing are not to her a splash of scalding water? That's a recipe for tender frog's legs. Listen we start saying now, "Yano? Yes."

Saving the world from a pandemic potential

THE SWINE FLU EPIDEMIC IS VARIOUSLY PARTS of the world, with Mexico City at its epicenter, is bound to aggravate the global economic crisis at a time when there are fatal signs that the world economy is beginning to turn a page. In Mexico City alone, over 3,500 venues have closed, including restaurants, churches and schools, for fear that the combination of rains, swine and human flu would result in human pathology. Travel to countries with known cases of swine flu is discouraged, affecting hotels, shopping malls, airlines, the food industry. We pray that the new A epidemic doesn't unravel all worsening into the pandemic alert 6, and that it spares our shores.

By the way, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap assures that eating pork is not harmful, but healthconscious caution that it should be cooked well.

* * *

Sen. Joker Arroyo lamented that the Supreme Court, in discussing an additional 212 pairs that seats which will rest at least P2.3 billion, had to "explain and explain" its decision. He observed that the SC substituted a formula instead of wording for Congress to "correct" the system, and without conducting hearings, it ordered the ruling to be immediately executory. But if the Court reconsiders, the change is deemed dead in the water by itself to blame, since it has been consumed by investigations and ill-timed moves to change the Constitution instead of refining RA 7941, the existing law governing the party-list system, enacted 18 years ago.

For instance, it was obvious that the term "marginalized and underrepresented sectors" as stated in RA 7941 was being abused in many cases, to include even Bucher Park now. Arroyo said that the problem is not nothing has been done about it. It's easy to define "marginalized," but "underrepresented" is more nebulous. Associate Justice Eduardo Nachura asserted in his concurring opinion to the ponencia of Justice Antonio Carpio that the 2-percent threshold in limiting the winning party-list groups required "a far bigger congressional composition to make sense." Justice Nachura himself voted for the ponencia, by amending its membership to represent disenfranchised sectors, which are "mostly poor."

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

graphic realities. In fact, it was only last January that Ilocos Sur fired Governor Al Eleazar Jr. for still seeking to raise the current House membership from 250 to 300.

* * *

I too am puzzled as to why the Court ruled on this issue at this time. One guess is that it wanted to open the door to more party-list representatives in the May 2010 elections, in fulfillment of the Constitutional provision for 20 percent representation in the House. Another and perhaps more plausible reason, given Congress's long opposition to the change, may be to make this election difficult inasmuch as the increase in House membership to 254 from 220 makes it more difficult to come up with a three-hundred seat for an amendment. With this new composition, the change is deemed dead in the water up to May 2010.

From Court sources, I learned that the campaign for increased party-list members began two years ago, with Justices Dolores Quisumbing, former Dean Raul Pangalangan, Adolfo Azcuna and members of Ateneo Alumni as counsel. Dean Amado Valdez of the University of the East College of Law came in as additional counsel when the issue was set for final decision. Valdez cited the German court's favorable decision on the change from party-list groups to raise the 5 percent vote threshold, as provided in the basic controlling law and have Germany be argued that 51 local groups had complied with the lower threshold of 1.87 percent, so the last of the seats and that if Bavaria with 3,000 votes has one seat, so too must a party-list group garnering 200,000 votes.

* * *

Evidently the magistrates were swayed by that, except for retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan whose victory is being challenged before the House electoral Tribunal for alleged human rights violations. The new party-list members are safely in. But the ruling only showed how much has to be done in refining this Philippine adaptation deemed necessary to strengthen representation of marginalized groups and democratic opportunities for them. Efforts must be continued to prevent the party-list system's corruption by political dynasties.

* * *

Cecile Ahearn and I began our Sunday morning cable program with taped classical guitar music from Immigration Commissioner Marcelino "Nonoy" Libanan, an accomplished musician, but right now he's engrossed in meeting the BID and Bureau of Customs targets. He's proud of the fact that when he started out mid-2008, the BID was No. 4 from the bottom in terms of efficiency, with the personnel accepted in petty wrangling and turf wars. Today, he's proud of his team, with BID personnel making improvements in the areas with the help of the Asian Institute of Management, in simplified procedures to eliminate "facilitators" and get rooms to computerize clearance procedures, reducing average waiting time by 80 percent.

Libanan and Bureau of Customs commissioner should be presented within five minutes in the main office and that the waiting time at the airport has been reduced to seconds. He also noted that BID accounted for 70 percent of the P1.75 billion in 2007 to P2.1 billion last year and half the way through this year, it's 64 percent above target. Another program he has introduced to ease revenues and create jobs, allows foreign businessmen making substantial investments and having at least 150 Filipinos born to a permanent resident visa. Libanan also said that with a donation of P320 million worth of equipment from the International Office of Migration and the Australian government, the BID has put together world-class biometrics data base which, when it is inspired, will connect it with police agencies abroad and foreign embassies here. The sophisticated record-keeping helps the BID meet its goals "to keep aware those who should be in the country, and to get rid of those whom we want to leave," he said.

'Yes you can'

Human Face

Ma. Cierez P. Dayo

YES, SUMMERTIME AND MANY PEOPLE ARE taking a break, going off to distant or secret places in order to heal, to be healthy, to help themselves and others, to try to become whole again. You, too, and take a book along.

One good summer reading for mankind for the gems of a book "You Can Prevent and Control Cancer" (111 pp., Fine Bio-Consciousness Publishing, 2009) by Christine G.F. Gonzalez, PhD., cofounder of the Wellness Institute. The book, subtitled "A personal journey to body living and consciousness," is launched last Thursday in the Auditorio de Manila University by Joey B. de Leon, SJ wrote the foreword.

Gonzalez is a doctor of naturopathic medicine with offices in natural health and wellness centers. Her book is a wonderful, educative and reassuring. The book is based on her years of extensive research and experience. It is a how-to book for people who want to take charge of their own health and well-being.

The nutritional diet and lifestyle suggestions that the book gives are meant to inform those who are interested in different aspects of natural therapies primarily to prevent cancer, and second, to help cancer patients.

The book is divided into four sections. Section 1 deals with the seven underlying causes of cancer. Section 2 is on the seven pillars of health with a subsection on cancer in the Philippines. Section 3 offers some practical, natural cancer therapies. The appendix is a collection of lists and supplementary information by other experts in the field.

From the looks of it, the book is far from pious and threatening. It is a happy book, very well laid out and very easy to read. Each chapter begins with individual way to book designed Amy Macaraeg. I judge a book also by its cover and design, you know: it good book must look good, too.

Gonzalez tackles the seven underlying causes of cancer: environmental toxicity, nutritional deficiencies, chronic dehydration, acidity, emotional stress, mental and spiritual toxins and electromagnetic toxicity. Interest is listed only as a side factor. Indeed the causes is saddled, she writes, the toxins.

Yes, cancer can be prevented and controlled. "If we know how cancer progresses," Gonzalez says, "then we know how to prevent it." She adds: "Cancer is already present, ample scientific evidence exists demonstrating that it is possible to reverse cancerous cells into normal cells. This can be accomplished by balancing the body's pH and proper nutrition. Through the use of herbs, juices and teas of the pathogenic cells are destroyed, transforming and converting them back to aerobic respiration. Once in this condition, the cells (tumor suppressor) gene is reactivated. The converted cells eventually die off from normal apoptosis. Yes, cancer is reversible."

Find the seven pillars of health: healthy diet, rehydration, detoxification, mental and spiritual growth, stress management, managing deadly enzymes, environmental transformation.

Nutritional therapy or "food as medicine" a big section which I found very helpful. Seven cancer superfoods plus a whole array of nutritious sources that are readily available.

Detoxification is tackled extensively: what it is, who needs it, when to do it, why and how [prolonged detoxification ("cleansing the liver of 100") plus a detoxification diet, colon therapy, coffee enema, natural detoxification for drugs, caffeine, nicotine and sugar detoxification. Gonzalez also discusses mental and spiritual detoxification.

While the book gives a key dose of scientific information, it also offers many practical activities which are actually good for us. Nature stepping, for example. Gonzalez suggests you make every effort to go to the beach and/or the mountains for fresh air. The latter does it to highly oxygenated.

But we have to nourish and strengthen our person, Gonzalez emphasizes. That means boosting our immune system.

"Cancer cells are always being created in the body," she writes. "It is an ongoing process. Within us is an amazing network of protection and defender cells, viruses and organs to help our fight all forms of diseases. They are programmed to protect and defend our against millions of bacteria, microbes, viruses, fungi and parasites that would harm us on a daily basis."

That's the body's immune system, the superhero that identifies the enemy, defuses an all out war by attacking the invaders or goes on stand-by mode. There are ways to strengthen the superheroes, the designs of which are: nutrients, dietary supervision, music and laughter. There is a chapter on laughter, precisely.

There's more. Again, Gonzalez lists the food sources. Want to try an immune-boosting smoothie?

The book is not a substitute for medical diagnosis or prescription. It simply wants to offer information. "I believe that the new medicine is education," Gonzalez says, "and the best cure is prevention."

Gonzalez credits her patients from whom she has learned a lot. "My patients have shared their cures journeys with me, revealing something deeply true in each of them," she writes. "I am one of them. As I participated in their journey I grew in my own insights and understanding of the disease. In turn, this new depth of understanding helped me extend me to help them and others. More importantly, it helped me to grow in my own healing. I am privileged to be a part of such a process and to be becoming actively involved in their own healing, to that process of healing themselves, they also become healers to others."

Where to get the book? Wellness Institute (0917.5300.365; Global Food Supplements (0918.900.4552/555; The Open Grapevine (856.2031.

Send feedback to cruz@pldtgmail.com

A dog's tale

A TINY BURST OF LIGHT SPELLED DISASTER FOR A year-old me. In less than a minute, a most anticipated afternoon of play turned into sick days, vomiting with the first sources until the last traces of fever vanished from my eyes. One has been my mortal enemy.

When I was 10 years old, I asked the pediatrician if I was doing during an allergy attack. He assured me nobody dies from allergy unless it manifests itself in the extreme form of triggers another all

Young Blood

Veronica King

We seem to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Is the welcome overwhelming? Join the conversation by posting your comments at inq.net/youngblood and below.—Ed.

Because of our rules, all of us children-keep a pet were always warned before I could finish or saying it. As a kid, I had the impression that it would be easier for me to ask for a brand-new car.

But after a lot of pleading, I was finally permitted to have a pet chick and a pet duck, provided they stayed out of sight and caused no trouble to anyone.

I bought my first pets from the stadium outside my school. Since my uniform had two front pockets, I put one in each. They broke pocket out and turned in all directions the entire time I was walking home. I can still remember them feeling so warm against my tummy that it almost felt like Christmas.

The duckling died just days after I got him. The little yellow chick grew into a slightly malnourished brown hen. She stayed this no matter how much or what I fed her. In hindsight, perhaps she was never meant to grow fat like the chickens in the cartoon shows I used to watch.

Once as we ran down his dinner, I was shocked to find that my chicken hen also had been nourished and nurtured instead. Before that, I always thought that chickens came from a factory, complete with a plastic wrapper and yellow sticky tape around the top. It never occurred to me that living, breathing animals were actually killed for food. I felt guilty at not being able to stop my pet's slaughter and felt bad about it throughout the night.

Bad experiences with animals, like losing hatred to most my poor adopted puppy to the province, led me to close my affection for any animal I came in contact with. I detested them and didn't want to have anything to do with them. I wouldn't touch one unless forced to do so. I thought they were gross and dirty creatures. Their existence was absolutely meaningless to me. I thought they were just things, like paper or soft drink bottles.

Whenever my friends spoke about their pets, I listened but never really understood why they cared so much about them. I sang the famous "Doesn't Want a Pet" anthem. And I always thought that I would be the last for the "no cry" life.

But as we all know, God finds a way to make a person grow a heart. Soon after I finished college and in my boyfriend's house, I found Innocent ang "Mamon Enemy" from the cloudcats I saw the whitest, fattest bunny. Later I found a puppy and he enchanted me. He was small, soft and, despite the lack of a bath, smelled like a butterfly, in that manner, I fell and I became him.

Amongst the brood of five, he sat on his furry white bottom just staring at the floor while his siblings engaged in puppy chaos. He was the only one who seemed disinclined to play because he had more than his fair share of milk. Even as a puppy Lancelot was a bookish soul.

I met Lancelot during the entire wife-to-be. I was afraid I might be asked to give him back.

When Lancelot arrived, our family together with all the nurse welcomed him as if they had been waiting for him for some reason. They loved him instantly. A relief pill streamed into that on my curly hair and my face floated off the ground.

Lancelot was barely three months old when we met, so I bought him diapers, baby formula and a baby blanket. I checked his heartbeat and respiration every few hours because I had heard about sudden infant death syndrome. If anyone's baby was going to die, it was not going to be mine (or his!) The slightest change in his appetite or his sleeping patterns would send me hurrying to the vet, scanning the Internet for answers to my questions and phoning old friends whom I had newly reconnected before.

There are lots of things devoted pet owners share. We can always forgive their misdemeanor deeds. We find ourselves and ourselves in enough their mistakes as ours. We think we have the cutest dog in the whole world. And, oh, before I forget, we all have funny stories to tell about them.

When Lancelot was around six months old, he had an "accident" on our 3M rug, the kind that is made of interwoven rubber that contains shock waves. So, the product of his "accident" smeared on top of the rug. I was about to pick it up when, to my shock, he swallowed it. My sister and I didn't know what to say to each other but when my sister picked him up, he made a burp. So I asked him, "Lancy, was it good?"

When I became a pet owner, I became a flick believer in not arguing with animals as it is for whatever or whatever purposes. I am Lancelot to each and every animal I see. Animals should only be expected and only to carry their lives or rather people's lives.

My best friends already whenever I see a dog tied to a steel chain fastened with a tight collar or locked inside a very small cage, I feel sad. I hate how they're treated. I feel like barking at their owners and wish that what they are doing to their pets would be done to them. The rule to 'Never do unto your pet what you don't want done unto you.

Through Lancelot, I have come to understand the meaning of unconditional love. He doesn't give a care what political or social status I have or my clothes and looks or not. I realized that he is happier whenever we sit beside each other or when it is time to give him his nightly nummy milk. He has changed my view about life without saying a single word—and he doesn't need to.

Veronica King, 22, owns a boutique in one of the malls in Metro Manila.

Notice to Youngblood contributors:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the part you work in. Kindly send only original articles. Also, Gen. tributes or thoughts or should not have been previously published.

Out of sight, out of mind

IT'S PROBABLE THAT AS FAR AS THE GOVERNments of Brunei and the Netherlands are concerned, they won't object to Generals Alexander Yano and Cardozo Luna being made Philippine ambassadors to those countries. And while Southeast Asian hosts will be in the Department of Foreign Affairs...the appointments will affect the chances of career-not reaching retirement age achieving plum ambassadorial posts—the OSA is also used to correct diplomats crabby being elevated aside to accommodate political appointees.

It's significant that Yano is being compared to the late Rafael Seva, as he is the chief executive's nominee for sending him abroad. Nearly all the prior appointees to the Yano appointment being ex-Sec. who were sacked by President Arroyo, and being made an ambassador to get him out of the way because he registered objections to anomalies.

President Aquino himself, in his diary, makes no mention of any such objection to anyone such as Yano, Luna, Lim, Esperon, Jr., Ermita, Gen. Romeo Jr., IV JC, Commander, Gen. Ricardo Visaya, Inst. Chief of Staff, J-2, Col. Su., to update the contingency plans and the list of target personalities in the event of the use of emergency powers."

Yano remained deputy chief of staff up to 1971 and was appointed by the vice chief of staff in 1974. It would until 1975 that he was sent overseas as ambassador, although he remained a commissioned officer until he retired from the military in 1976. If you thought it was confusing earlier on Yano, some observers like Jose Cabochi point to 1971 as a turning point in the race. Now Society, when the removal of Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor marked the end of the period of reform.

Yano, Luna, Lim, Esperon, Jr., and several another under a other mentioned in reports: Manuel Yan, who was sent overseas as an ambassador after he retired and was replaced by former Justice, the

The Long View

Manuel L. Quezon III

chief of staff until 1981. Both Yan and Ileto have been described as belonging to the active, ceasing a number of military officers' names, and who were elevated as not eligible enough by Marcos, who preferred to rely on officers from the GF Yan, guard, for example.

Whatever reservations or objections Yan and Ileto may have had concerning either martial law or Marcos' handling of the military didn't prevent them from accepting diplomatic postings. And this, to my mind, is where the comparisons being made between them and "security guy" Seva break down.

Let's assume that after 1975, Minister decided that there was too much of a risk for the country to remain at home, and that it would be more politically advantageous to send him abroad to join Ileto in representing the country's interests. Let's assume, further, that the traditional notions of solidarity confirmed in which both Yan and Ileto were drilled reminded of their acceptance of their respective ambassadorships, on the principle that if the Romulo and the Philippines given you an order, you don't say it to obey.

Then it's possible to conclude that on the one hand, what presidents like Marcos feared was that respected officers might become a focus for anti-administration sentiment, with the officers in question pardoned, while the prestige and sense of duty of those inconvenient, old-fashioned soldiers made them useful in obtaining goodwill elsewhere. So, on the whole, it was a politically reasonable political solution for all concerned and one made a deliberate decision to send on the officers obeying orders to exile them abroad.

The same thing seems to be at work in the cases of Yano and Luna. But what makes both men so inconvenient to the administration at the present time? It's the respect in which both men are said to be held by most of the officer corps, and the apparent willingness of both men to remain within the AFP and in relationship with the commander in chief. On one hand, both men have tried to preserve the military from political interference, while on the other hand trying to dampen down any unrest arising from grievances among enlisted men and the officer corps.

Both, it seems, have been fairly successful at this, and one reason may be that both embarked on a policy of "strict constructionism," considering the Constitution as the basis for their actions. Both have been accused of being the military's partisan political opponents, but the demand of civilian leaders that they stop playing the role they've come to see as constitutional framework is concerned (assuming plots to declare a state of emergency or some sort of martial law).

The version of this policy I heard was basically that "there will be no coups so long as the civilian leadership refrains from efforts to entrench itself and by violated its stay in power." This implies a scenario: neither the officer corps thus is would the former, respectively, for the military to avoid rocking the boat, and even, instead, to be controversial actions of interests enter office in 2010.

Ileto's early retirement and his assignment, along with his reportedly smart but headed for politically expressed views, today, may therefore be seen a case of their being willing to toll or share events, in order to permit at least one more non-controversial chief of staff to sit before the truly controversial Gibbs Bangit takes command no later than the end of the first year of the Aquino administration. It is, I suspect, a wise decision. Leaving orders, they will provide any institutional benefits at all or are merely postponing an inevitable resumption of unrest within the ranks.

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Article on Pasig relives memories of yesteryears

I READ HEWSOME LIGHAYO de Leon's article titled "The Pasig speaks: the secret of a river's past." (Inquirer, 3/22/09) Atoni Lichauco's grandaughter wrote a delicately and lovingly. I enjoyed reading it because I share her fond memories of the river. In 1943-44, I, as a 9-year-old boy, and my family lived close to the Pasig River and used it when it was clean and alive with fish and duck farms along its banks. I watched it rise and ebb calmly with the tide to summer and rose into a raging, turbulent waterway during the rainy seasons.

And my grandparents' home in Malolos, Bulacan, is beside a river from where we used to board bancas to visit the family farm in Hagonoy and, like her, I watched the farmers from the bancas window paddle the banana, laden with their colorful produce, to the public market in Malolos. My parents then a Ramon de Leon.

I am writing Mr Lichauco because I had a classmate in first year high school (school year 1947-48) at the defunct de Manila, Pedro Rueda, whose surname was Lichauco. I don't remember his/her name because we called each other by our family names. I have a class photo of him. I would like to share the photo with Mr Lichauco, should he be her son. And if he is, I hope he is doing well and in good health. I wish you well, and warm regards.

—ROGELIO L. RUIZ,
rogruiz941@juno.com

LETTERS

Boyle-Nievera face-off at Pacman-Hatton bout?

IN THE COMING MANNY PACQUIAO-Ricky Hatton fight, singing phenomenon Jason Boyle should square off with our very own Mia Jai Nievera for the honors of singing the Beatles' respective national anthem. If that doesn't floor us, throw in Charice Pempengco for a reprise of her electrifying performance of the "Star Spangled Bikini" at a show in Cleveland opening ABC's hot United States. How's that for a coming-out?

The above suggestion should be a "win-win" strategy to usher in more millions of viewers and money for the promoters, organizers and media outlets.

—JEROME JACOBO,
jerome_jacobo@yahoo.com

Cops deny 'parricide' conclusion on Elong case

WE WOULD LIKE TO CLARIFY SOME points in the news story headlined, "Second autopsy points to suicide, cop tha agrees." (Inquirer, 4-23-09)

The story pointed to an unnamed "QCPD ranking official" as the source of the information that "the directors of its (QCPD's) major units Elong's death was 'leaning toward parricide' before the case was transferred to the National Bureau of Investigation."

On the contrary, may we categorically say that the questions and attributions in the story concerned or attributable to other (previous City Police Director because the QCPD had not arrived at such conclusion before the turnover of the case to the NBI.

The same story also referred to acting QCPD director Senior Supt. Elmo Eli that Diego as "among those supposed ed accusation that entitled the 'downfall' an ney of Bulacan's in-laws..." This is not true.

—ROBERT L. ITO,
police chief inspector,
chief, Public Information Office;
—ELMER M. SOLTURIO, M.D., PESE,
police senior superintendent,
ad hoc Chief of the Office,
Quezon City Police District

I spoke to three sources (high officials) in the QCPD who said that the investigation was leaning toward parricide and offered complete. I stand by my story.

—ROBERT ORTEGA,
reporter, Inquirer

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DFA staff appeal to GMA: Respect career officers

THUMBS UP Pacquiao exudes confidence as he arrives at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas. He faces Britain's Ricky Hatton at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in a junior-welterweight boxing bout on Saturday (Sunday morning in Manila). AP

'It's insane': Pacquiao fame likened to Ali's

From page A1

"It's insane," said the 78-year-old dean, top honcho of Top Rank, which promotes Pacquiao's fights.

The "Pacman," he declared, is the new face of boxing.

Just as electric was the reception England's Ricky Hatton got from flag-waving compatriots as he made his own grand entrance, which officials feared the crowds drawn to his world welterweight title defense against Pacquiao here on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

"I may be fat and I may be second best guitar who is going to be the best guitar period for you?" the "Hitman from Manchester" told hecklers before mounting a small ring set up at the lobby.

Security personnel washed off surging crowds as Pacquiao got off the bus. Even for the world's top ranked fist fighter, the Tuesday's welcome still came as a big surprise for its sheer scale and size.

"It's bigger than the Oscars! Dr. Lo Hoya one," Pacquiao said, recalling the storied bash landing in the Manchester boxer's weight downtown against the Golden Boy late December, which the Filipino won by a knockout in the eighth round.

'Most manic'

Arum likened Pacquiao's unprecedented fame after beating De La Hoya to that of heavyweight legend Muhammad Ali.

"It's better than the Oscars! Dr. La Hoya one," Pacquiao said, recalling the storied bash landing in the Manchester boxer's weight downtown against the Golden Boy late December, which the Filipino won by a knockout in the eighth round.

"Most manic"

Arum likened Pacquiao's unprecedented fame after beating De La Hoya to that of heavyweight legend Muhammad Ali.

"Ali, remember, was on feed up with politics, with the Vietnam war, so you can't exactly equate Manny with Ali, but he's a superstar. He's a fighter, so is a pure fighter, he's the most popular, the most manic that I've ever seen."

Arum noted that Pacquiao had even headed recently on Time magazine's list of the "world's most influential persons, which included US President Barack Obama.

Dapper in khaki slacks, dark coat and flamed cap, Pacquiao ambled with an entourage that included his mother Dionesia, chief trainer Freddie Roach and close friends Chavit Singson and Widee Salud.

"I don't want to talk too much before the fight," Pacquiao said. "I want to let my fists do the talking in the ring."

Hatton fans

Hatton, who slipped from his lightening limousine to black shoes and a Hatton-brand T-shirt, joked with the crowd and posed for photographers before doing a brief workout at the 16,000-seat Grand Garden Arena, venue of the

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that the appointments of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Alexander Yano and Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gaudens Lista as ambassadors to Brunei and The Netherlands, respectively, were "the latest instances of a disturbing trend that has caused the demoralization and weakened professionalism in the merit system in the [DFA] and the foreign service."

The petition, a copy of which was sent to the Inquirer, has so far gathered some 150 signatures of the DFA home office alone, according to Rodolfo Maceda, secretary general of the DFA Bank and Fils Association.

There are some 700 employees at the DFA home office, Maceda, who also heads the DFA Personnel Association, said the figures by phone.

He said the petition would be hand to 500 regional officers and foreign posts for more signatures.

In a separate statement, Maceda questioned the "moral conviction" behind Yano's decision to retire early to accompany the governor to Brunei.

Cluster meetings

It appeared that at the DFA, the appointments of Yano and Lista, as announced by Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro in a press statement on Monday night, were the most immediate concern of the rank-and-file employees.

Maceda said "cluster meetings" were being held at the DFA home office to discuss the situation.

He said that while the troopers had the prerogative to appoint diplomats, her propensity to commission retired or retiring military officials to accredited posts "does not look good in the eyes of the international community."

"We are thinking of suggesting a consultative committee on the appointments because it looks like there's an open door policy for ambassadorial posts," particularly for the ambassadorships to the chiefs of staff, Maceda said.

He called for "respect for the DFA career officers" who undergo intensive training and climb each rung as part of the rigors of the diplomatic service.

No 'agreement'

Maceda pointed out that Brunei and the Netherlands had yet to give their agreement, or the consent of the receiving state for the dispatch of an ambassador.

He said that in the diplomatic process, the announcement of an ambassador's appointment was made only after an agreement had been issued by the receiving state.

Maceda said the same thing happened when the Palace nominated former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. to be permanent representative to the United Nations, and the latter left for New York even before confirmation by the Commission on Appointments.

A ranking DFA official who spoke on condition of anonymity told the Inquirer on Tuesday that Teodoro broke protocol when he announced the diplomatic appointments of Yano and Lista ahead of Malacañang.

Foreign Service Act

Maceda expressed hope that Sec. Ariroyo's successor would not carry on her practice of appointing retired military officials to top diplomatic posts.

He cited the Foreign Service Act of 1991, which provides that career ambassadors for ambassadorial rank constitute at least 70 percent of the total appointees of retired generals to diplomatic posts was objectionable.

Distorting trend

The trend of appointing retired generals to ministerial ahead has disturbed the diplomatic community, according to the official.

The retired generals occupying diplomatic posts include Rey Cimatu, Eutemio de Leon, Generoso Senga, Efren Abu, Noe Wong and Abdul Qauref, among others, according to the DFA.

In the petition, the foreign service corps urged Ms Arroyo "to consider career officers before appointing consistent ambassadors to head embassies and permanent missions, and to appoint more career ambassadors ... in keeping with the true spirit" of the foreign Service Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7157).

"We appeal to concerned authorities not to give due course to the commissions," the corps said.

It also sought Ms Arroyo's "support" in "professionalizing the foreign service."

RA 7157 provides that to "strengthen the Career Service Corps and to enable it to respond to the challenges in the field of foreign relations, the President shall be guided by the principle that a majority of diplomatic and permanent missions shall be headed by career ambassadors," the corps said.

"The appointment of nonservice ambassadors prejudices the professional advances of career foreign service officers who have extensive training and deep experience in advancing Philippine national interests in the international community," it said, adding:

"There is a pool of qualified career officers who have track records of serving the country well and are available to head Philippine missions ... There is no national general and prominent members, from which the President can choose."

The corps also noted that the appointments of Yano and Lista were "not cost-effective" as these would be concentrated with life luxuries on the opposing authority.

Is summer over? Just early rains, says Pagasa

Transcription A1

season, has not officially ended, as the southwest monsoon, which brings in the rainy season, has not entered the country, the weather bureau said yesterday.

Nevertheless, the heavy rainfall over the past days may usher in an early start of the rainy season, said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Thrice normal level

This is because the rainfall in Metro Manila is thrice the normal levels, said Pagasa chief Nathaniel Cruz.

"Usually in April, the driest month of the year, we get only around 36 millimeters of rainfall. But this year, we got more than 100 millimeters," Cruz said. "Rainfall has been abnormally high in the entire country."

He also noted that rainfall levels for March were higher than its previous years.

Waiting for monsoon

"We are waiting for the southwest monsoon to formally set in as long as this has not happened, we cannot declare that the rainy season is already upon us," Cruz told the Inquirer.

The southwest monsoon usually sets in to blow into the country in the second half of May.

In another interview, Cruz said the heavy rains in Metro Manila and other parts of the country could be attributed to "La Niña" conditions persisting over the Pacific Ocean and climate change.

La Niña is a weather phenomenon characterized by excessive amounts of rainfall.

Two low-pressure areas

As the summer is expected to end soon, Pagasa has spotted at least two low pressure affecting the country, one 80 kilometers northeast of Virac, Catanduanes, and another 400 kilometers west of Mindoro.

While no tropical cyclone is affecting the country, Pagasa said in its website that Southern Luzon and the Visayas would experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms.

Rains will be widespread over Southern Luzon, particularly in Quezon, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Albay, Sorsogon, Masbate, Iloilo and Northern Samar.

Pagasa advises residents in these areas to watch out for flash floods and landslides.

The rest of the country will be cloudy partly cloudy at times cloudy. There will be isolated rain showers and thunderstorms, mostly in the afternoon and evening.

Moderate to strong winds blowing from the northeast will prevail over Northern and Southern Luzon, according to Pagasa.

Moderate to rough seas will be expected in the areas while slight to moderate seas will be manifested elsewhere.

Light to moderate winds from the northeast and north will prevail over the rest of the country, which will have slight to moderate seas.

Bank deposit insurance raised to ₱500,000

Transcription A1

Ms Arroyo did not deliver a message during the ceremony, which was witnessed by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri and lawmakers who authored the measure.

RA 9576 increases the maximum deposit insurance coverage provided by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) to depositors from ₱250,000 to ₱500,000.

PDIC is a government corporation established in 1963 to encourage savings in banks, protect insured deposits and draw idle funds into the banking system, among others.

At the ₱500,000 level, 97.2 percent of all deposit accounts will be fully covered by insurance, officials said.

Keep deposits in banks

In terms of absolute amounts, 31.7 percent of all deposits in the banking system will be covered by the higher insurance cap, up from 24 percent under the previous level.

The increase was designed to encourage the depositors to keep their deposits in banks and protect them as global economic tumpes around the world, officials said.

"The most important acknowledged that is to strengthen confidence in our banking system. By having the insurance coverage guaranteed by PDIC, people will be more confident to make deposits knowing that if something happens, they will certainly get reimbursement," acting Executive Secretary and Press Secretary Cerge Remonde told reporters.

The law, a reconciled version of the Senate Bill No. 2064 and House Bill No. 5911, amends the Republic Act No. 3591, also known as the the PDIC charter.

Deposit-splitting schemes

The law grants the deposit insurer the authority to determine which deposits should be insured and which should not—a deterrent for fraudulent deposit-splitting schemes which regulators accuse Legacy Group rural banks of engaging in.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has placed Legacy's 13 rural banks under PDIC receivership since December after finding out that they were engaged in unsafe and unsound banking practices and were not able to fully service withdrawals by depositors.

Results of a BSP investigation showed that the Legacy banks were offering interest rates much higher than the market average to entice depositors. The deposits were then being misplaced off by its owners, awarding the banks with unusually fat service withdrawals.

It was estimated that government would have to shell out ₱1.4 billion to pay the depositors of the failed rural banks.

RA 9576 also authorizes the PDIC to conduct independent special examination of banks and impose loan deposit accounts "to minimize or limit the risks" to the Deposit Insurance Fund, Malacañang said.

Sovereign guarantee

It also makes PDIC a sovereign institution six years from the implementation of the law and provides the agency with a sovereign guarantee in which the government undertakes to pay its liabilities should its funds run out.

Cabinet officials had proposed increasing the insurance coverage to ₱1 million as early as October last year until the global financial turmoil. It was backed by Ms Arroyo.

At the time, the bills pending in the House of Representatives sought only to double the coverage from ₱250,000 to ₱500,000.

The PDIC had proposed to Congress had said then that increasing the coverage to ₱1 million was proportionate to a similar move instituted by other countries in the face of the global financial turmoil.

At the time, the PDIC sought amendments to its charter that would double the ₱250,000 deposit insurance coverage for a period of three years to boost confidence to the local financial system. With reports from Duaine L. Lucas and Michael Lim

Rescuers to be honored for courage, sacrifice

From page A1

be awarded the Bronze Cross medal—the fourth highest honor given to military personnel.

The soldiers risked their lives to reach the islander place the crashed on a slope of the thickly forested Mt. Alyan Hyan in Barangay San Miguel in Bagaspas, according to their commanding officer, Col. Romeglo de Vera of the Army's 503rd Infantry Brigade.

'Remarkable'

Aside from the perilous trek, the soldiers, who were joined by 21 volunteers, braved the dangerous animals in the area as well as the heavy rains, De Vera said.

"This is something remarkable," he said.

The soldiers will receive the medals from Army officials in the national wreath of Mary at the 5th Infantry Division headquarters in Camp Melchor Dela Cruz, Isabela.

The 21 volunteers—composed of five policemen, five firemen and 11 noncombatants and members of the local government—will also be honored, De Vera said.

Stranded

The nine-engine Islander, owned by ChemiTrad Corp., left the Bagasbasa Airport on April 2 with nine pilots and five passengers for a 25-minute flight to Maconacon, Isabela.

It was reported missing after it failed to land in Maconacon.

The wreckage was spotted 12 days later.

The pilots, Capt. Tomas Felan and Capt. Steiner Ruiz, and passengers SPO2 Rolly Gascolan, Celestino Salacay, Abelardo Enggay, Jaime Saldias and Joel Bustillo all died in the crash.

But even after the bodies were recovered on April 21, the rescuers were stranded in the woods over the two days because of the rains.

They were ferried to the Bagasbasa Airport only on April 24.

US child first swine flu fatality outside Mexico

WASHINGTON—THE FIRST U.S. death from swine flu, and the first outside of Mexico, has been confirmed amid increasing global anxiety over a health menace that has also swept Germany and Austria over the course of affected nations.

The flu death of a 23-month-old child in Texas was confirmed Wednesday by Dr. Richard Besser, acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Germany confirmed three cases Wednesday and Austria reinforced one case.

Besser said he was saddened by the US death, but added, "I don't think it indicates any change in the strain," he said. "We see with any flu virus a spectrum of disease symptoms."

The world has no vaccine to prevent infection but US health officials said it have a key ingredient for one ready in early May, the big step that vaccine manufacturers are awaiting.

But even if the World Health Organization ordered up emergency vaccine supplies—and that decision hasn't been made yet—it would take at least two manufacturers to produce the initial doses needed for human safety testing.

President Barack Obama asked Congress for $1.5 billion in emergency funds to help build more drug stockpiles, monitor future cases and help international efforts to avoid a full-fledged pandemic.

"It's a very serious possibility, but it is still too early to say that this is inevitable," the WHO's Dr. Keiji Fukuda, who is telephone news conference.

Flights to Mexico banned

Cuba and Argentina banned flights to Mexico, where 159 people have died and over 2,000 have been sickened by the swine flu virus. In a bit of good news, Mexico's health secretary, Jose Cordova, late Tuesday called the death toll there "more or less stable."

Mexico City, one of the world's largest cities, has taken drastic steps to curb the virus' spread, ordering such shutting down schools and on Tuesday suspending closures to sports and swimming pools and even rolling restaurants to limit service to takeout. People also wrestle out mail to wear masks in hopes of prevention.

The number of confirmed swine flu cases in the United States rose to 66 in six states. In New York, the city's health commissioner said "many hundreds" of schoolchildren were ill in a school where some students had confirmed cases.

New Zealand, Australia, Israel, Britain, Canada and now Germany have also reported cases.

But only in Mexico so far are there confirmed deaths, and scientists remain baffled as to why.

The WHO report against closing borders in some the spread.

"Border controls do not work. Travel restrictions do not work," WHO spokesperson Gregory Hartl said in Geneva, recalling the SARS epidemic early in the decade that killed 774 people, mostly in Asia, and showed the global economy.

Too late to seal borders

The United States...although shedding anything travelers for the ill who may need care—appears to be late for that tactic.

"Sending a border is an opposite to our intention is nonproductive at this point," Besser said. "We have already had cases in 10 states of influenza virus everywhere. We had plans for trying to respond in and Kansk and of quarantine and we don't want encouraging far from our borders. That's not the case here." Besser said a telephone briefing of Nevada-based health providers and reporters. "The idea of trying to limit the spread to Mexico is not realistic or at all possible."

Besser said the CDC is working to limit the spread to Mexico is not realistic or at all possible."

authorities sought to keep the strain in existence. The deaths are concerns around the world. Still, the CDC calls the new strain a combination of pig, bird and human viruses for which people may have limited natural immunity.

Hence the need for a vaccine. Using samples of the flu taken from a 9-year-old boy who fell ill in Mexico and the United States, scientists are engineering a strain that would trigger the immune system without causing illness.

The hope is to get that ingredient—called a "reference strain" in vaccine jargon—to vaccine manufacturers by the end of May, so they can begin their own laborious production tests, said CDC's Dr. Rebecca Dutra, who is leading that effort.

La Gloria town swine flu Ground Zero; 4-year-old is living exhibit

Front page A1

bandoche so bad his eyes hurt. She took him to a clinic, and after a few days of antibiotics, he has recovered.

Earliest confirmed case

No one told Hernandez that her son had become Mexico's earliest confirmed case of swine flu until the Veracruz governor held a press conference on Monday. But Edgar's case confirmed his confidence that the illness was behind him. Their hillside town is grateful now is the epicenter.

Local health officials and Federal Health Secretary Jose Angel Cordova downplay claims that the swine flu epidemic could have started in La Gloria, noting that of 35 mexican samples taken from respiratory patients there, only Edgar's came back positive.

Pig, bird, human virus mix

Confirmation that the boy was infected with H1N1—a strange new mix of pig, bird and human flu virus that has killed 20 many as 159 people in Mexico and now spread across the world—wasn't made until last week, when signs of the outbreak elsewhere prompted a second look at his sample.

"If the people who are supposed to be familiar with this illness don't know what it was, how will we ever know how we can get it?" Hernandez said Tuesday.

'It all came from here'

Hernandez and doctors came from Jalapa, the state capital, and Veracruz city to see Edgar in the weeks after he was tested. But they said nothing. "They just wanted to see him." A team nurse again last weekend, after federal officials confirmed the swine flu cases but Thursday and started closing schools and canceling events in Perote.

Again, they left without saying anything, she said.

Cordova insists the cost of the community had suffered from H2NC, a economics flu, based on other 161 samples. While Mexicans authorities haven't determined how or where the swine flu outbreak began, Gov. Fidel Herrera and Tuesday that "there is not a single indicator" suggesting it started in La Gloria.

But Jose Luis Martinez, a 34-year-old translator of the town, finds the swine flu connection the minute he heard a description of the symptoms on the news: fever, coughing, joint aches, severe headache and, in some cases, vomiting and diarrhea.

"When we moved to the relocation, we said to ourselves, 'This is what we had,'" he said Monday. "It all came from here. ... The symptoms they are suffering are the same that we had here."

Two others died of pneumonia during the La Gloria outbreak. They were buried without testing.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN: Edgardo Hernandez, 4, who according to the Veracruz state government received first the swine flu, poses at his home in La Gloria, Veracruz. —AP

Pig farms blamed

Some people blame their illness on pig farms from farms that lie upwind, 6.5 kilometers to the north. The toxins blow through taller towns, only to get trapped by mountains in La Gloria, they say. They suspect their water and air have been contaminated by waste.

Enrique Cuevas de Alvarez, half-owned by Virginia-based Smithfield Foods Inc., has 72 farms in the surrounding area. Smithfield spokeswoman Keira Ullrich said the company has found an absence signs or symptoms of the presence of swine influenza in its herd or in employees working at its joint ventures anywhere in Mexico.

Animal health expert Peter Roeder, a consultant to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, said many possibilities exist for how the virus first jumped to humans, and that it could have hop passed months or even a year ago.

Roeder said it's possible someone contracted the pigs could have passed a human influenzan virus as a pig already infected with another type of swine flu, and then that pig would have also come into contact with a bird virus. Then, the new H1N1 virus formed could have been transmitted back to the workers.

Pass that's just a theory—and no one has any evidence that it happened in La Gloria.

"It's all one mix," Roeder said by phone from the Philippines. "The only thing that we know is that we have a virus that is transmitting between people and it is causing some concern."

Fetid smell

But residents say they have been bothered for years by the fetid smell of the farms. Local health workers interviewed in early April, sending off the town of La Gloria and spraying to kill flies people said were swarming around their homes.

When Associated Press journalists visited the remote La Gloria Carroll farm that has been the focus of community complaints, the men were sprayed with water. Victor Ochoa, the general director, required the visitors to shower and don white overalls, rubber boots, goggles and masks and step through chambers bathed running any of the 10 anesthetic where 15,000 pigs are kept.

Ochoa showed the journalists a black plastic lid that covered a swimming pool-size cement container of pig feces to prevent exposure to the outside air.

"We are very conscientious and consistently vaccinated and they are all taken care of according to current sanitation rules," Ochoa said. What happened in La Gloria was an unfortunate coincidence with a big and serious problem that is happening now with this new flu virus."

Back to Edgar

Edgar, however, has never left the Perote valley. The family never went to Mexico City or even the dunes. Edgar's father, a bricklayer who earned Edgar, only weeks in the area.—AP, Mexico City

Residents here are certain Edgar was not the only swine flu victim in their town.

Juan Rodriguez died of pneumonia on March 17 or 18, according the grandmother, Josefina Mendoza, 71, said doctors have some in here view the infant's parents.

Irene Bonilla, 23, said her 2-month-old boy, Emanuel Apolinar, died March 12. No one has interviewed her her reporters. AP

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Across the NATION

500 Luisita farm families told to leave

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—HACIENDA LUISITA Inc. (HLI) is giving farm workers until Oct. 30 to stop planting and recopping portions of the 6,453-hectare Tarlac sugar estate rendered idle by a 2004 bloody labor dispute and an agrarian case pending in the Supreme Court.

More than 500 families received copies of a memorandum issued by Herman Gregorio Jr., HLI assistant manager in the Cojangco family-owned estate, according to Joseph Cayaba, chair of the Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon (AMGL).

Noelle Resonoles, Department of Agrarian Reform regional director, said he was still confirming the number of families who had received the memorandum dated Dec. 16, 2008.

The new order sparked protests again from more than 100 members of the United Luisita Workers Union (Ulwu) who joined the camp out of the AMGL in Congress and a dialogue with DAR officials on Tuesday.

Ulwu and AMGL leaders went to meet with officials of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines this week to seek support to their appeal to the Supreme Court to resolve the case in their favor.

The groups were also scheduled to picket the high court.

Gregorio told the strikers not to plant to "preserve the rule of peace, harmony and unity in HLI."

"While we admit that we have already accomplished this to a certain degree, we [are] still exploring other possible ways and means to pave the way for an ultimate and [good] solution to this [agrarian dispute]," he said.

This was the first time that HLI was known to have issued such order. It came as HLI confirmed reports that the "de facto lease of HLI lands to so-called Sumilao but does to accommodate prospective settlers only a handful[few] are benefiting," Gregorio said.

The lands include three leased to Tanduay corporate governing and other cash crops, Ilaw reds said.

Ulwu members cultivated some 2,000 hectares in the estate to grow food crops for their families after the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order stopping the DAR and the Presidential agrarian Reform Council (PARC) from distributing the lands to farmers.

Based on the rolls of the Ulwu, ng mga Magsasaka sa Agrikultura, the Kings com pelegs has benefited 838 families (or 1,676 people in the villages of Malapasiran (144.3 ha), Asturias (239.91 ha), Bantog (256 ha), Cut-Cut (275.9 ha), Balibir (133.4 ha), Bitaliza (240 ha), Hacienda (310 ha), Texas (140 ha), Burgos (160 ha) and Bunang (51.3 ha).

Ulwu said no actual land distribution happened despite the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program because the Cojangcos allotted shares to farmers in the company through the stock distribution option (SDO).

Bene Cadang, Ulwu president, said farm workers received P6.50 daily during the planting and recopping activities.

Defending their right to the land had cost them lives, he said. Seven farmers died in the confrontation of strikers, security guards and policemen on Nov. 16, 2004. Three more leaders were killed through extrajudicial executions months later.

Cadang said the leases were made by former directors of HLI who lost in the election held before the 2004 joint stake sold to the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union.

"Among those who illegally leased the lands were provincial local to the Cojangcos, town workers who bought the stations and supporters of village chiefs," Cadang said.

Gregorio said the land among leaders has not made it feasible to solve the problems at HLI. The Oct. 30 deadline, he said, would allow the farm workers to crop their crops and recover production expenses.

Cadang called the deadline a "clear violation of strikers' right" to "stay in concert" (the farmers from the vast property. He noted that it came a day after Congress approved Joint Resolution No. 1 that extended the GARP for six months without the compulsory acquisition scheme.

Assistant Secretary Rafael Mariano said the PARC's cancellation of the SDO in 2005 made the lands in workers the "true owners of the lands."

With GMO ban, animal industry collapse feared

BAGUIO CITY—The provincial ban on genetically modified (GMO) products could lead to the collapse of the local livestock, poultry and grass feed industries, the provincial veterinarian warned on Wednesday.

About 90 percent of the ingredients for poultry and livestock feeds needed in Negros Occidental are imported, and the majority of these are genetically modified, Rosario Decena said.

Average feed requirement is 140 sacks (one a day), 60 percent or which is corn and the remaining volume is made up of soybeans, wheat, fishmeal vitamins and minerals.

The 91.3 MT of corn is needed for about one million broilers, four million grower chicks, half a million layers, 800,000 ducks and geese, and 400,000 pigs, Decena said.

The provincial government recently ordered the shipping out of tons of genetically modified corn in compliance with an ordinance banning GMO seed sets.

But Decena said the the GMO imports were needed because the livestock industry imports all of its soybeans, sorghum and wheat meal, and 98 percent of its corn is GMOs.

People involved in the livestock, poultry and grass feed industries will need today to thrash their livelihood problem.

If they still seek a reconsideration on the GMO ban, the governor will have to make a decision, Decena said.

Gov. Nestor Fong said the provincial government is duty-bound to enforce the GMO ban. But he said it would receive the position papers of those aggrieved for reconsideration. Carlo D'Cruz, Inquirer Visayas

THIS SILTED stream of water is contained by the Ambuklao Dam, an aging facility of the idle Ambuklao Hydroelectric Power Plant in Bongabon. Run-off water from this dam is captured by the larger San Roque dam in Pangasinan. TOMMY CRUZ/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

Siltation worries investors of aging power dams

BAGUIO CITY—A HANGkawel firm, which bought two of the country's oldest hydroelectric power facilities, is studying Benguet's disheartening watershed to determine if their interest on its operations.

SN Aboitiz Power Inc. (Snap), an affiliate of the Aboitiz Group of Companies, bought from government the 70-megawatt Ambuklao plant, which for two decades has been subject to siltation, and the 100-MW Binga plant.

The San Roque multipurpose dam project, billed in 2000 as Asia's largest dam, serves as reinforcement area for silted run-off water coming from Ambuklao and Binga, as well as water spilling from rivers in Benguet.

On Tuesday, Lorenzo Hontiveros, chair of the Baguio land management committee, told Snap Benguet Power Corp. (SBPC) had commissioned a study to determine how siltation affects the capacity of the San Roque Dam, which straddles Benguet and Pangasinan.

In a report presented to the municipal council of Binga, SBPC estimated the dam's life span from 70 to 80 years because of unscrupulous siltation coming from the dams, Kaulong said.

He said the study had focused on the area of Forest Reserve Line of the upper and lower Agno River basin watersheds, as well as the rate of habitation posed by tenured Ibaloi forests.

Kaulong, who is also president of the Federation of Small Scale Miners' Associations, said the study had not looked into the impact of mining on the power plants' siltation.

Abner Villanueva, Cordillera spokesperson of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), said the agency reached the same conclusions about the impact of a population forest community on the watersheds.

After receiving the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the Binga plant from the Environmental Management Bureau on April 21, Snap proper controller Gabe Gabaldon III said his company was in outreach the state of the crowding Barrios of Binga and Ambuklao because it has no tenured user-concession claims.

National Power Corp. still retains supervision over the dams owning Ambuklao and Binga, as Snap plans to introduce cost reforestation projects to reduce the siltation in the area, Gabaldon said.

Snap has administrative control over economic enhancement programs for the Agno River watersheds, which used to be supervised by the DENR and Napocor, Hontiveros, Inquirer Northern Luzon

2,000 vets receive US gov't claims

By Desiree Cabuz
Inquirer Pan Baste Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—ABOUT 2,000 Filipino war veterans have received deserved benefits for service with the US military during World War II, a US Embassy official said here on Monday.

Jonathan Stoltz, director of the Department of Veterans Affairs of the US Embassy, said the claims of about 30,000 Filipino veterans living in the country who applied for benefits under the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office's outreach program in February had been undergoing processing.

If their claims are approved, they will receive either $9,000 (P436,240) or $15,000 (P727,900), depending on their relationship status.

Stoltz, who was guest during the 60th anniversary of the Liberation of Baguio on Monday, said the US government was also aware some veterans had died while waiting for the release of the benefits.

"This is why we encourage veterans not to delay their application. If they feel that they are eligible, they have to file their claims as soon as possible. Anytime a veteran passes away, it is a great tragedy to us," he said.

In case a veteran dies before his claim is released, only the living spouse, not his children, will be eligible to receive the $5,000 benefits, said Stoltz.

Assistance

He said the US Department of Veterans Affairs had been releasing $8 million monthly as assistance to veterans of other Filipino war veterans before the equity bill for Filipino veterans was signed by US President Barack Obama.

"The equity bill is one more way ... of honoring the service and bravery of World War II veterans. We also want them to recognize their service in the war and beyond," Stoltz said.

During Monday's program, 70 veterans were present to receive honors from the city government and the US Embassy for their contributions to the liberation of Baguio from the Japanese Imperial Army on April 27, 1945.

The surviving veterans, the widows of their colleagues and their children offered roses to those who died at the Veterans Park.

Joseph Mallonza, a seamstress of the Baguio Centennial Committee, attended the ceremonies motivated commemorate two uncles.

"He told me he owed it not for the veterans. The yellow color of this medal symbolizes gold while red symbolizes the blood that was shed by the soldiers," Alidmate said.

"The legacy of the veterans is in the hands of the young men and women to make sure that the generation to come will not forget what they did," Stoltz said.

Radioman's killer gets up to 17 years for homicide

DIPOLOG CITY—A REGIONAL trial court yesterday found a 25-year-old suspect guilty of killing broadcaster Armando Pere in 2006.

Judge Alfred Benlon of the RTC Branch 28 sentenced Joy Antionatus, a jobless resident of Bonifacio del Sur, to a prison term of up to 17 years.

But in a separate trial, Antionatus said Pere's killing was not a case of murder but homicide.

"Since the qualifying circumstance of evident premeditation and the aggravating circumstance of use of motor vehicle have not been proven by clear and convincing evidence, the crime committed is only homicide and not murder," Antionatus said in his decision.

Pere, 51, was driving his motorcycle along Rizal Avenue here after his commentary program over Radyo Bida when he was shot and killed by one of two men on the afternoon of July 10, 2006. The victim was known for his hard-hitting criticism of politicians and businessmen.

Witnesses later told police she was crossing the street from the Dapitan del Sur National High School to around 1:20 p.m. when she heard three gunshots. She said she turned her head and saw a person clamped on the ground.

She said two other persons were seen near the man she had pursued dead. "I saw one of those two persons twirling a gun and thereafter boarded in the tricycle. I recognized the man who twirled the gun as for the accused," she said.

The witness told the court Antionatus' former boyfriend had been neighbors for 12 years. One of Antionatus's sisters was her classmate, she said.

The witness said the accused was nailed at his father-sibling on another motorcycle.

Antionatus had consistently maintained his innocence. He had claimed that he would not have killed Pere as he was playing billiards at the Ancore compound in Barangay Galas in Dapitan, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. when the broadcaster was shot.

Kaulong is about 20 minutes by car from here.

Antionatus said that after playing billiards, he went to a "kumbokan" (cockpit) at Flying A here and was surprised to find out that he had been tagged as Pere's killer.

Antion trashed his defense as too much to stand in court.

He told Antionatus to failed to convincingly clear the suspicion of the witness, who had identified him.

"[The] burden should of the accused, which was substantiated and uncontrovertible by clear and convincing evidence , does not deserve as much weight to lose as positive and affirmative testimony," Antion said.

He pointed out that the accused admitted in his statements that he was in Dipo and riding on a motorcycle the day the broadcaster was killed.

Antion also ordered Antionatus to pay the Pere family P453,500 in damages.

Harold Pere, son of the slain broadcaster, said the family was happy at the decision but that it did not straighten them as to why he (Pere) was killed and who might have ordered it.

"We wanted to know why and who were behind it," he said.

Moreno Sola Jr., regional authority officer of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas in Southern Mindanao, said it was not important if Antionatus was found guilty for homicide and not murder.

"We are thankful to the Department of Justice and the prosecutors for making sure the case would progress," he said.

Like Pere's family, Sola said the KBP also wanted to know the motive for the killing and the mastermind.

This is the third case in which a journalist's killer was convicted in the Philippines since Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo came to power, according to Nonoy Espina, officer of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and head of the research section of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

At least 103 journalists were killed since 1986, according to NUJP documentation, Espina told the Inquirer. Orlando Dionisio and Elito Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao

12 more battalions needed vs rebels–Teodoro

By Nestor P. Burgos, Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

SAN JOSE, ANTIQUE—TWELVE more battalions are needed to secure areas where conflicts between government troops and rebel or armed groups continue, according to Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro.

With around 500 soldiers per battalion, this means that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will need at least 6,000 more men and P2 billion more to confront effectively the country's security concerns, Teodoro told a press conference during the Binirayan Festival here on Sunday.

But he said this number could change and would have to be validated because of the changing objectives and security threats.

Teodoro said that recruiting more soldiers and increasing the military's operational funds instead of acquiring modern and high-tech weaponry should be the priority.

He said that an increased personnel would enable the Armed Forces to provide a deterrent against security threats and to combat resistance in retaking while fighting armed groups.

Troops will also be stationed in areas already cleared of rebels so that the latter would not return there, he said.

One main reason for the ceremonial milestone and celebrations of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group is the shift in focus of military operations because of the lack of troops, he said.

The priority he said, should be not on multi-role fighter planes and other high-tech equipment but on acquiring armor, combat and civil engineering equipment for the infantry, such as carriers and supply vehicles.

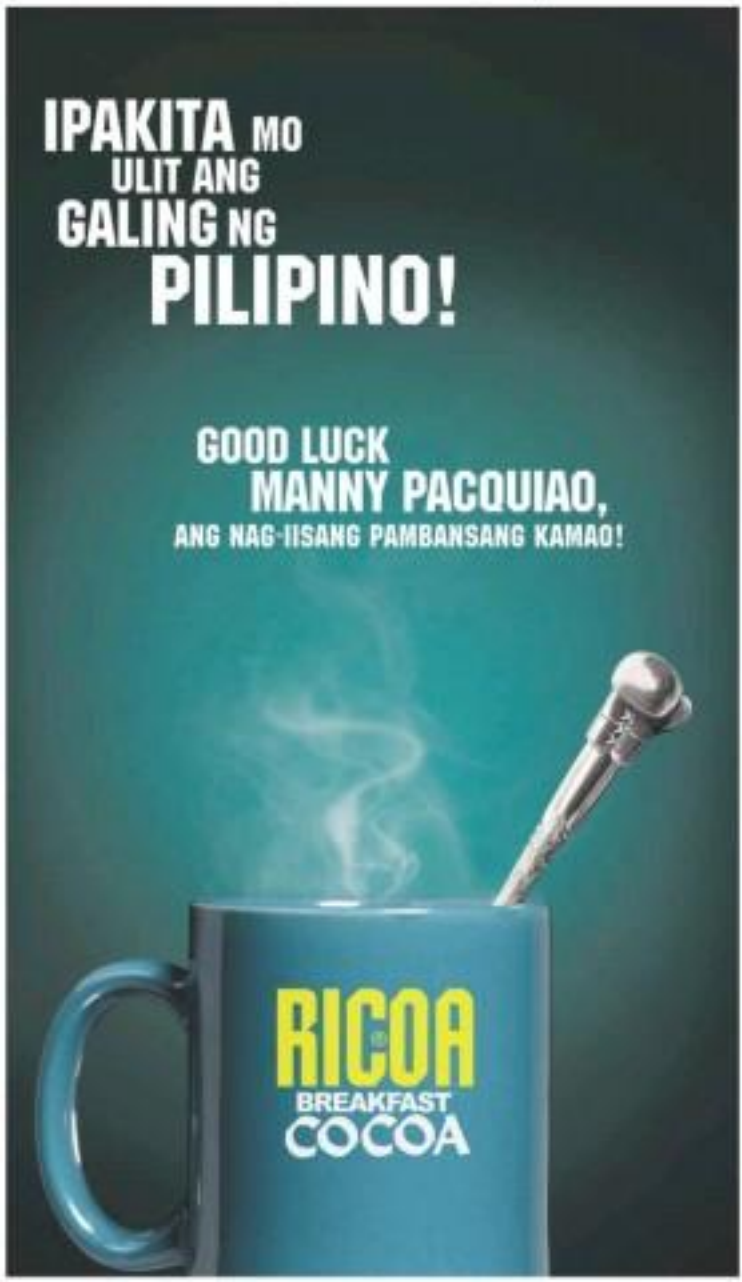
The AFP has been fighting three armed groups at the same time—the Abu Sayyaf, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the communist-led New People's Army. It is also tasked with responding to rescue and rehabilitation operations during disasters.

"I don't know of any country where its armed forces has been able to operate the way the Armed Forces does with its limited resources," Teodoro said.

He alleged resources—over the ruling military strength of China as shown in a recent international issue of the Chinese Army where it displayed for the first time its modern armored submarines.

Teodoro said the growing Chinese military power does not pose a threat to the Philippines or countries in the region but is more a concern of those in other regions.

MEDICAL MISSION
Dentists in the room of a resident of Barangay Pauba, Ligao City in Albay province as part of a humanitarian mission to Bicol of Filipino and US soldiers. —EDGAR SAMARO



Nueva Ecija rice farmers confront low buying price

CABANATUAN CITY—AMONG THE economy ruins, farmers here are facing a sudden drop in the buying price of palay being offered by private traders.

From a high of P15 to P16 a kilogram before the rains came shortly after Holy Week, the price dropped to P10-11 a kilogram.

Because of the strong rains, many farmers were forced to harvest their standing crop and thresh the grains already sprouting in the field. They were then constrained to sell the grains at half-much lower prices.

The bad part is that many traders stopped buying palay, saying they did not have facilities for drying the grains.

Serafin Santos, provincial agriculturist, said local palay production this season was expected to reach 1.6 million metric tons (32 million cavans), which, he noted, was better than the 1.4 MT during the dry season cropping last year.

He said the production area for the summer dry season cropping totaled 140,000 hectares compared to last year's 130,000 ha.

A farmer in this city, Severino Pajarito, 68, harvested 360.6 cavans (17.28 MT) using the IR-8 hybrid rice variety. He was declared winner in the search for the hybrid rice highest yielder launched by the office of the provincial agriculturist.

Santos said farmers, who earlier complained about the alleged defective hybrid rice seeds sold to them, have been harvesting 150 to 200 cavans a hectare.

"Hybrid rice varieties are still our best hope for better yields," he said.

The unusual rains that caused problems at the height of rice harvesting week negated the supposed high economic gains for having high harvests.

"Many of my co-farmers lost at least P300 per cavan because of the low price of palay," said Wilfredo Bernardo of Barangay Villa Cuizon in Science City of Muñoz. "That's already P30,000 per hundred cavans," he said.

He said farmers who finished on the services of mechanical dryers lost heart because the few facilities in the city could not handle the volume of palay waiting to be dried.

"Due to the high expense in farming and the bad weather, a P25,000-net income is what the farmers get per hectare after four months of hard toil on the farm," Bernardo said in Pilipino. *Jeannine Rivera, Inquirer Central Luzon*

50,000 purged from Camarines Sur voters' list

PILI, CAMARINES SUR—THE NAMES OF some 50,000 people have been purged from the voters' list in Camarines Sur since last month, according to the Commission on Elections provincial office.

Isaiel Badoza, provincial election supervisor, said that although the names had been erased from the list of some 900,000 voters during the October 2007 elections, it could not be presumed that the number of registered voters would decline.

Badoza said he expected the number of qualified voters in the 2010 elections to increase by 10 percent as voters' registration continued.

He said the names of those who had failed to vote since 2004 were withheld in accordance with provisions of Republic Act No. 8189, which states that those who failed to vote for two consecutive elections are automatically disqualified from voting.

The names of voters who have died were also dropped from the list, Badoza said.

At first, the number of voters whose names were purged reached some 68,000, the Comelec official said. But because some voters have reactivated their registrations, the total number deleted from the list has shrunk to 50,000. Of this number, 11,132 came from Naga City. *Jaime Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Aline Jon Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmirano

Long, desperate wait for laid-off workers

By Marivic Cinco
Calbayan, Laguna

AT LEAST 144 LAID-OFF WORKERS IN LAGUNA are calling for the immediate issuance of a series of executions on illegal dismissal cases that have been long overdue at the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC).

"It really is a long a wait," said their spokesperson, Ronald Hipolito, during the launching of the Kalsadan ng Manggagawang Hindi na Tinanggal (Road) on April 14. Ronald is an alliance of laid-off workers, mostly from electronics and garment factories in the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon).

The NLRC, an agency under the Department of Labor and Employment, serves as a quasi-judicial body to resolve labor disputes. A labor arbiter issues the writ of execution based on the commission's decision.

Ramil has so far documented about 400 pending labor cases to the Calabarzon.

According to Hipolito, 70 percent of the cases had already received "favorable decision" from the NLRC since the last quarter of 2006, but were still awaiting writs of execution.

Ramil's records included the cases of dismissed workers of Blue Bar Coconut, a dedicated coconut company in Lucban town in Quezon, which have been pending since 1998.

In 2006, the NLRC decided to grant the workers P54 million, but no writ of execution has been ordered, Hipolito said. "Waiting for the writ of execution takes five years at the very least, even if the NLRC has already made its decision," he said.

In most cases, individually-filed complaints take even longer to progress. "And it does not end as that, when the (company) management counters the decision through an appeal," Hipolito said.

Ramil also offers free legal counsel to victims of unfair labor practices. "We aim to unite the worker's union and build alliance in following up their cases," to spokesperson said.

Desperate wait

Elen Bebadas, 41, did her job when the textile company she was working for shut down in 2005.

"I tried to find other jobs but they had an age limit of only up to 28 years old," Elen said. She said her 54-year-old daughter depend solely on the pension that her late husband left.

She hopes for the P180,000 separation pay, corresponding to 15 years of her services, that the company has not given yet.

She plans to put up a "sari-sari" (retail) store when she receives the money.

Robert Tradio, used to be a maintenance worker in a glass company in Canlubang town in Laguna. He was hired in September 2006 to what he said was a surprise reverse-lesson after the management dismissed 13 officers and members of the workers' union.

"They just wanted us from entering the premises and posted a notice saying we could not come in anymore," Tradio remembered that day. There was no refund that dismissal has remained pending at the NLRC.

Tradio, who now works at a shipyard in Dinganguo City, said he joined Ramil to help other workers.

Hipolito was one of the 67 workers laid off from a car accessory company in Canlubang in 2006. The firm sacked them for missing a day's work on a non-working holiday for said.

In May 2007, the NLRC decided to reinstate them and ordered the payment of back wages, now amounting to a total of P29 million. Since no writ of execution was issued, the 67 workers are still unemployed.

"Workers are in a long, desperate wait," Hipolito said.

Some workers who could not find other jobs had no choice but to return to their provinces.

"We have a case in Cavite where a former factory worker opted to go into prostitution," Hipolito said.

Current

With the global economic crisis, the NLRC has been receiving an average of 50 cases daily, said its labor sheriff, Greg Macaraeg.gs.

Some cases, he said, would take at least three months before being decided upon, depending on several factors from both parties, such as attendance to hearings and appeals.

"There are cases ended with a day, while cases involving big companies usually take longer. Companies have the resources to appeal (a court's decision)," he observed.

Gemerino Santos, NLRC Southern Tagalog executive labor arbiter, said the agency had a backlog of 2,167 cases from 2008 to 2006. Backlogs, as the NLRC defines, are unsettled cases exceeding nine months.

The unresolved cases are primarily a result of a shortage of labor arbiters in seven Isnila Calabarzon and Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan).

But over-all, some labor arbiters come in and amendments were made to avoid unnecessary delays.

For one, a labor arbiter must issue a speedy of 12 decisions and 15 settlements in a month.

The NLRC has also created "task forces" in which the arbiter has to concentrate solely on a particular case to speed up the process.

TEACHERS are briefed on the Sustainable Energy Development Program at the Malabig-Bacalone gualtiertal plant in Laguna.

Teaching energy conservation

By Marivic Cinco
Sta. Laguna

ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS ARE adopting a module on renewable energy and alternative fuels in their Science, English and Mathematics lesson plans to reinforce the value of energy conservation among students in over 138 schools in the country.

"We saw its relevance. While still young, they (students) need to have the understanding (of energy conservation)," Rina Tamayo, senior information, education and communication consultant of the Sustainable Energy Development Program (SEDP), said in Bay, Laguna, on April 13.

The SEDP organized a four-day caravan (April 20-23) involving some 30 teachers from Davao, Bohol, Baguio, Marikina and Makati, which have been completed as demo-cities.

The group visited the Pinatuo Biogas Facility in Quezon City, the solar water manufacturing plant in Bulacan, Power Philippines, the Malabig-Bacalone geothermal plant in Laguna, the Asia micro-hydro plant in Benguet, and Northwind Tarn in Bangui, Ilocos Norte.

The workers were joined by representatives of the Clean Cities Coalition, which is composed of local governments, the Department of Education, transport organizations, private businesses, and foundations that have been assisted by the SEDP since 2005.

Story books

"The good thing is that teachers have the capacity to provide connection. From mere discussion of wind power, they can connect it with climate change," Tamayo said.

The Renewable Energy and Alternative Fuels Module, of the Sustainable Energy Module (SEM), was piloted to 32 public elementary schools and 13 high schools in Bulacan City in school year 2007-08. It was written by 20 teachers within a span of four months, said Maria Mathilde Ortavio, SEDP representative to the Clean City Coalition.

"(In a week) two meetings were allotted for the discussion of renewable energy," he said.

In 2007, Dymphna Liriel Jocson, a Reading teacher for six years, wrote the storybooks, "Nilo and Isly" and "Pepito Power" as part of the module. She is now the principal of the Quirino-Salaz Elementary School in Ilaya, Bulacan.

"Isla and Isly" is a story of two children who spent their vacation in a hacienda with their grandmother. "It teaches the value of thriftiness and saving behavior food," Jocson said.

The child characters learned how solar energy is used to dry up rice and turn it into pop rice. The story also features how windmill pumps water into the rice field.

"Pepito Power" talks about risk-discouraging their parents to use biofuels. "If children are aware that power from power-rooms is expensive and they know the importance of sun and wind), they can influence their parents," Jocson said.

People, Jocson believed, can contribute to energy conservation by simply putting out light during daytime and make full use of the sun's energy.

Addressing pollution

In Makati, teachers added the topic on climate change to lessons on alternative fuels and renewable energy to address the city's pollution problem, said one of the module writers, Josefina Celebrado.

According to Tamayo, three of the five major streets in Makati were found to have exceeded the limit of 200 micrograms per cubic microns pollutants set by the World Health Organization.

The module, written in October 2008, will be implemented in nine high schools and 28 elementary schools in Makati city school year.

"There's a big difference," said Celebrado, who teaches Physics in the first Bonifacio High School, as the SEM addition. "Before, the syllabus only included concepts and the types of alternative fuel and renewable energy. We were (now) able to expound that knowledge (by tapping) climate change," she added.

She said an activity (for example, two planning and making miniature wind power plant and hydroelectric power plant) has been incorporated in the lesson.

"Children are not aware of what's happening around. They do not know the importance of turning lights off (when not in use), so them must have that consciousness to global warming and climate change," she said. "The bottom line is to save Mother Earth."

Energy source

According to Ronaldo Angeles, science research specialist of the Philippine Energy Management Division of the Department of Energy, the Philippines has tapped 33 percent for its energy needs from renewable sources, 23 percent from oil, 17 percent from gas, and 26 percent from coal since 2007.

"We encourage the use of renewable energy as fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, will eventually be depleted and have harmful effects," Angeles said.

The DOE promotes the "Big Three"—which stands for biomass, geothermal, solar, hydro and wind—as sources of renewable energy.

The Renewable Energy Act of 2008 was passed into law on Feb. 1 and provides tax and other incentives to companies using renewable energy.

With high hopes for the campaign, Angeles said the Philippines remains to be the top producer of wind energy in Southeast Asia through windmills in Bangui, Ilocos Norte.

SteePower Phippines in Sta. Rosa City in Laguna, with an annual manufacturing capacity of 300 megawatts for solar stalks and 200 MW for solar panel, also commits to be the "second offshore" solar energy-producing plant.

"We don't say it's the solution to everything," Tamayo said on the SEM introduction. But he believed introducing awareness among the youth will help address the country's energy problems.

MERALCO

MANILA ELECTRIC COMPANY

NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the validation of proxies for the 2009 Annual Stockholders Meeting scheduled on May 26, 2009 has been moved from May 13, 2009 to May 18, 2009 at 9:00 A.M. at Lopez Building, Meralco Center, Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City.

Pasig City, April 30, 2009.

EMMANUEL R. SISON
Corporate Secretary

Lopez Building, Meralco Center, Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City
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Mavs oust Spurs

Pierce jumper seals Celtics victory

SAN ANTONIO—THE DALLAS MAVERICKS COMpleted a surprise series victory over the higher-ranked San Antonio Spurs on Tuesday, while the Boston Celtics' bid for a second-round berth was grounded when Houston lost to the Portland Trail Blazers.

The sixth-seeded Mavericks rode Dirk Nowitzki's 31-point performance to a 106-93 Game Five victory in San Antonio to claim their best of seven Western Conference series by a 4-1 margin.

Houston, which could have joined the Mavericks in the second round with a win, stumbled an 89-77 defeat to Portland but still leads the series 3-2.

In other games, the Boston Celtics overcame the stubborn Chicago Bulls, 106-104, in overtime and the Orlando Magic evened to a 91-78 win over the Philadelphia 76ers, giving both winning teams 3-2 advantages in their Eastern Conference match-ups.

In San Antonio, Nowitzki hit 11-of-17 shots for game scoring honors but the German forward received plenty of support as the Mavericks turned back San Antonio's two-man tandem of Tim Duncan and Tony Parker.

Duncan finished with 30 points and Parker added 26 points and 12 rebounds, but the remainder of the team had just 37 points.

"We're not finished yet," Dallas's Jason Terry, who scored 19 points, said.

In Boston, Paul Pierce's jumper with 3.4 seconds to play in overtime ensured a narrow victory for the Celtics, who list Ray Allen to doubt in regulation.

"I just thought when Ray fouled out, it was time for me to really step up," said Pierce, who scored 32 points in the 110 minutes after Allen left the game. "Better late than never."

But Gordon served 26 and Andrés Nocioni had 14 points and 17 rebounds for Chicago, but Brad Miller missed the potential game-tying free throws with two seconds left in overtime after Rajon Rondo fouled Ginobili hard to prevent a layup.

It was the third time in five games the teams have needed overtime, a surprising first-round struggle for the defending NBA champions.

In Orlando, Dwight Howard delivered 24 points and a career-playoff best 24 rebounds to help the third-seeded Magic dominate the Sixers.

In Portland, the Trail Blazers went on a 11-3 fourth-quarter run to stop the Rockets.

Reuters, AP

INJURED Celtics forward Kevin Garnett (right) knocks Chicago's Ben Gordon during a timeout. AP

NCR matches Calabarzon's 7 pool golds

By Jane Navarro

TAGUIG—NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION and Calabarzon equally shared 14 of the 30 gold medals at stake in the pool as they sank the competition yesterday in the Palarong Pambansa at the Lyric Sports Development Center.

Delta Angela Cordero emerged as the day's most formidable athlete after compiling 4 golden hat-trick for Calabarzon in the secondary girls division.

She sided the 400-meter freestyle and 200m butterfly before anchoring the victorious Calabarzon quartet that also included Marian Rosales, Erika Valenzion and Claire Adessa in the 200m medley relay.

Johannes Aguilar set a new record in the secondary boys' 100-meter backstroke with a time of one minute and 1.18 seconds to punctuate NCR's seven gold blitz.

The incoming fir La Salle University freshman erased the 1:02.26 mark Calabarzon's Benjo Bejo recorded in Puerto Princesa last year. Teammates Daniel Brian Hong took the silver in 1:04.46 and Niño Manuel Agapay the bronze in 1:05.83.

Aguilar later teamed the NCR quartet to victory in the 200m medley relay.

Another NCR bet, Clan Daniel Bernas, sided the 400m freestyle for secondary boys with a time of 4:21.26, before Kevin Sarmiento (4:06.99) beat NCR teammate Dumdoy Hong (4:09.46) to the gold in the 1000m back for secondary girls. Calabarzon's Claire Adessa finished third in 1:18.51.

REGION 11's Diana Maria Ba lands the triple jump gold with a leap of 11.38m at the Lyric Sports Development Center. GMA photo

Also striking gold for NCR were Anna Dominiq Sarmiento in the elementary 100m backs, Rafael Jim Morin in the elementary 50m freestyle and the elementary boys team in the 200m medley relay.

Omar Philip Sinotta, cousin of national swimmers Miles and Lavrin, upped our first-ever 2007 mark of 2:11.0 with a 2:10.34 clip in the elementary boys' 200m free in one of the morning heats before lowering the record later with a 2:09.39 feat in the same event.

Calabarzon also struck gold through Clarence Mercado (elementary boys 100 back), Catherine Bonifed (elem. girls 200 free), Mc. Aaron Ligas (elem. girls 50 fly) and the elementary girls quartet in the 200 medley relay.

In athletics, Shevin Coarter of Mimaropa eclipsed the 12-year-old feat of Southern Tagalog's Bene Boy Tarvate (1:57.0) with a 1:55.6 clocking in the preliminaries of the 800m for secondary boys.

But it was Calabarzon, Davao and the Cordilleras which made the route in athletics.

Calabarzon's John Paolo Bellis bested the pace to 34.14 seconds to ensure the gold in the boys' discus throw from teammate Oscar Onin-Jr. (30.56) and Jasper Jayce Jiménez of Central Visayas (30.07). Clifford Bonifer of Central Visayas broke the record of 41.02m.

Diana Maria Ba of Davao sided the girls' triple jump with a leap 11.38 meters, beating NCR's Abegail Marie Dino (11.14) and Peggie Garinday of Northern Mindanao (10.91).

The Cordillera's Maria Felice Illaga trained her own high jump record by a shot 0.01m to a 1.60-meter effort.

Alcantara thru; No. 3 Ruel falls

CEBU—TEEN SENSATION FRANCIS Casey Alcantara pulled off another coup with her third seed Rolando Ruel felling the stupidity in the Cebuano Doubles Open Tennis Circuit at the Basilisa Tennis Club.

Alcantara, the Australian Open boys' doubles winner, stormed to the quarterfinals by whipping Mario Salma, 6-0, 6-1, a day after eliminating premier partner Christian Tordecilla via same scores.

Stealing the spotlight was ninth seed Ronald Jones, who bested our Ruel, 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, to barge into the semi round.

The 24-year-old Jones simply came out more aggressive in the second and third sets after dropping the opening frame.

"He overpowered me in the first set," said Jones, who hails from Salem Gudone but went to school in Davao.

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PURONG PILIPINO
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FINISHING W	L
Pluth	1 0
Lewis	1 0
Magnolia	1 0
Pharma	1 0
Cebu	1 0

GAME TODAY
(Ilac Avar Gym)
2 p.m. — Zamboanga vs. Magnolia
4 p.m. — Lewis vs Cebu Derby

ORACLE RESIDENCE doesn for the No. 1 seed in the semifinals today when it tackles Magnolia Hotpower in the PBA Fiesta Cup showdown at the Ilac Avar Gym.

The 3-0 Titans, who sealed a semifinal seat with three games to spare, are looking to score a repeat of their first round 73-63 win of the Wizards in the 2 p.m. game.

Lewis aims for back-to-back victories for the first time in the conference against Cebu Derby Utah at 4 p.m.

The Holy Spirits bucked the absence of Jit Sison, JV Casio and Chris Tiu to overcome Pharex, 91-89, in overtime Thursday to raise their second to 3-1 and leave Jerry Isuper all trailing in top two spot in the Head three.

Lewis actually has a score to settle with Cebu, a team it has not defeated in the past two conferences.

"We always have a tough time against Cebu," said Lewis coach Egay Macaraya.

A lot of the Titans will be on the sidelines Thursday, who hope to count on the the conference of the steadying George Canete.

"It's not going to be easy," said Dutch coach Glenn Capacio, who is on his first conference as coach of the franchise. Gridoff II Tupaz

PUREFOODS' Rico Villanueva battles for the rebound against the Coca-Colaspan of Ato Teodoro (left) and Ho Briones.

San Miguel keeps card blemish-free

Chandler leads Giants past Tigers

By Manny B. Castillo

SAN MIGUEL BEER RODE ON A FOURTH quarter tear to subdue Talk 'N Text, 98-87, last night at the Araneta Coliseum to keep its Monsilor PBA Fiesta Cup skein open from official eight games.

Cabe Freeman scored 21 points and Olsen Racela had some critical baskets in the fourth as the Beermen snatched a winning streak they earned one four years ago when they last won a title.

The Texters led by as many as six in the third period but were knotted to just five points by more of the first eight minutes of the fourth to lose for the first time in four games and drop to 5-4 overall.

In the first game, Marquin Chandler made a triumphant return in a Purefoods jersey, scoring 30 points and grabbing 12 rebounds to lead the Giants to a 92-85 turnaround of the Coca-Cola Tigers.

"That's the reason why we patiently waited for Chandler," Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio told reporters after the match.

Chandler did almost everything in the match for the Giants, highlighting his offensive show with a seven-point swing to snuff the fight out of the Tigers and Get to 5-4.

Coca-Cola dropped to 2-6 after failing to take advantage of several opportunities to score things around in the stretch.

Tomorrow
First Game
PUREFOODS

MP—Chandler 30, 1 Yap 25, Ambrosi 6, Espinosa 0, Simon 0, Villanueva 6, Cavalido 4, Cruz 2, Ilt Yap 2, Nebrida 0

COCA-COLA 85— Perry 17, Briones 13, Tabagoni 12, Jackson 12, Tolat 8, Bumanlag 7, Gaddi 5, Dionisio 2, Rimando 0, Arnaldo 0.

Quarters: 17-14, 38-41, 64-51, 85-85

Second Game
SAN MIGUEL 98— Freeman 21, Hutchinson 18, Racela 12, Washington 12, Dalisay 11, Villanueva 7, Gonzalez 4, Pena 3, Custodio 2, Pingris 2, Pennis 2

TALK 'N TEXT 87— Castro 23, Asaytig 15, Ilt Sumalpong 14, Pett 14, Dillinger 12, Blade 0, Garey 0, Rhodes 0, Cardona 0, Tolentino 0, Lim 0

Quarters: 17-22, 44-41, 69-62, 88-87

Tams, Bombers trip FilOil foes

FINISHING	W	L
JRU	1	0
FEU	1	0
Adamson	1	0
U. Santos	1	0
La Salle	1	0
UP	1	0
Ateneo	1	0

GAME TODAY
(Rizal Memorial Colleges)
2 p.m. — JRU Bombers vs. Adamson
4 p.m. — UP vs La Salle
Derby
Quarters: Ateneo vs. Adamson

JAE EASTERN U MADE A ROUSING DEBUT yesterday while Jose Rizal U needed the heroics of John Wilson and Marvin Hayes to nip Adamson in overtime, 71-70, in the FilOil Flying V Pre-Season MVP Cup in San Juan.

Former NBP Youth Team standout Ryan Boone Garcia stepped up in the absence of Mark Barroca by scoring 16 points as the Tamaraws hammered out a 73-65 decision over University of the Philippines in the second of two games at the FilOil Flying V arena.

Wilson shook off a subpar performance in the first half and fired 14 points in the fourth and extra periods, including a big triple with 10 minutes left that forced overtime.

Hayes hit the game-winning free throw with 20.6 seconds left and blocked Jervy Cruz's potential game-winning shot to seal the Heavy Bombers' second victory in three games.

The Tamaraws, even without key players Barroca, Aldrech Ramos and Jiti Gosadiog, were handily troubled, building leads of as many as 14 points in the second quarter.

Mark Vincent C. Glangco, Contributor

V-League: SSC duels Ateneo

SAN SEBASTIAN HOPES TO BRING ITS 4-game against Ateneo Omaxon today in the featured match of a triple-header as the 30th Shakey's V-League first conference resumes at the FilOil Flying V Arena (formerly The Arena) in San Juan.

Despite their streamlining 24-26, 25-21, 25-15, 23-25, 15-9 victory over Lyceum Tuesday, the Stags (2-2) remain slight favorites over the Lady Eagles, who have an even 1-1 card.

Providing a sidelight to the SSC-Ateneo game is the showdown between Thai import Jamsenet Bunlue and 17-year-old prospective homebrewer Semnan of the Lady Eagles.

The Lady Eagles are well-rested a week after crushing the Lady Pirates, 25-20, 25-15, 25-14, 25-18.

Like the Lady Stags, Admirers is also gunning for its third win to stay within striking distance of early leader University of Santo Tomas.

The Lady Falcons clash with the St. Benilde Lady Blazers in the first game at 2 p.m., before veterans squads UP and Lyceum meet in the 4 p.m. match. Gridoff II Tupaz

Pray that Ricky doesn't play it slow and sticky

TRAINER FREDDIE ROACH DID A magnificent job putting on a painfully confidenced Casey Ibarra when he flew world championship challenge in Puerto Rico on Sunday.

Those were two distinct reasons why Roach mentioned me a surrender today.

First, the fight was not going anywhere for the gallant Filipino slug fest star.

A second and more heartwarming reason was this one offered by painter Emesto Delfin.

The reversed, undiscounted artist said it was obvious that Roach, a hanged up former featherweight marshen, did not want to see poor Casey fidelining at his corner's stemming hooves.

* * *

Actually, the referee couldn't've mind it perfectly had he cut off the carnage in the second round.

Of course, then perspicacity may pay wouldn't have sat well with the hometown crowd at Bugsay.

This exactly was the case with majority of Filipino fans who were initially shocked when Nonito Donaire was prevented from finishing off Raul Martinez, after the game but outclassed victor was floored again late in the fourth round on April 19 at the Intramuros Coliseum.

The fight was not going anywhere, said referee Jesu Pedigonzala, who added that, other than being a no-hitter to protect, Martinez had already suffered severed lids.

* * *

Bare Eye

Recah Trinidad

It's reassuring to hear that Filipinos had been chosen to be doctors.

He was declared intact, in point form after being taken to hospital.

Roach knows he can't name characters many times before, Beach definitely knew that another savage round could've caused untold damage to Pelletieu.

In fact, Beach would declare after the one-sided bout that, honestly, he had wanted to stop it as early as the seventh.

* * *

What's harder to determine, though, is the deeper punishment. Gerry could've absorbed in those two extra seconds—the eighth and ninth—when he bravely swallowed Ibarra's unpunishers.

These injuries, although still intangible, might be permanent and could cruelly manifest themselves years from today.

Which brings up the question: Exactly just did this WBO fellow concentrated refer to the case of stoppages?

In Donaire's win, it became clear that the IBF lower contents of skills and gave the championship over killer-punching power.

In the Pelletieu challenge which Beach had to stop, however, the WBO effectively ruined to cover a fractal fight on the road.

* * *

Roach knows it's a tentative proposing Casey from suffering undue harm, although the eye may think this.

Which rather bothersome was Roach's admission that, despite the awful disparity he had present his hopes on Lopez lasting and losing many during the fifth round.

That, plus the smile of a tough round-winner.

Asserts, in fact, learned sharper than swimming in the fight premium.

* * *

Of course, Beach, who list it perfectly with that can't quit the slugger tattoo on Oscar De La Hoya, strikes had similar to wonder upon admission.

But isn't he the same three-time Trainer of the Year who, in 2003, exiled Manny Pacquiao would've no trouble winning over Erik Morales —only to see the Mexican bloodied and beaten by El Terrible in their Rematch?

Here Beach has been boasting that Pacquiao, boasting on phenomenal speed, should be able to finish off Ricky Hatton inside three rounds on Saturday.

Let's pray Beach hits it right this time.

Hatton is the grabbing, brawling sort who, although visibly downed, could make it a long, sticky night for his unsuspected opponent.

Bata, Valle hurdle 1st-round foes

SAVANNAH CITY—AFTER THEIR Bayan exit in 2008 top veteran Gerardo Valle were handily assigned their respective foes at the start of the second Manny Villar Cup hurdles leg yesterday at the La Salette high school gym.

Bayan equipped Jhonvee Pena, 9-2, while the top seeded Valle drummed local qualifier Joseph Calata, 9-4, in advance to the second round of the island-hopping series presented by Sen. Manny Villar's Hillarich Taking in Pagadong ng Philippine Sports.

Aiming Bayan, a contender in all previous six legs of the circuit but still looking for its first victory, and Valle in the Last 16 are Carlo Banda over Sharlo Jhon Sinsuat, Jonathan Jovel Ardina, 9-6, while Jhon Hamid Search for the New Billionaire told winner Mike Takayama, 9-7.

"The ball component most of the time, so I was able to sustain my good start," said the 54-year-old Bayan in 10-game. "I hope this will be the case for the rest of the tournament."

Valle eased to a 7-1 lead from which his star-struck opponent never recovered.

"Valle is one of my idols and I'm so happy to play against him," said Calata, a 23-year-old spotlit se from Tagbilaran City.

Angeles leg winner Francisco "Django" Barcelona, Fernando Dorado, Ronnie Alcano and other fine leg topnotchers Raoul Gallego and Roberto Gomez were still playing at press time.

Villar gained the opening slot and challenged all aspirants to give it their best shot.

"Kung sino lang ang gusto, sabi ko nga, bigyan ko ng chance," said Villar, who was joined by Sen. Ping Lacson in declaring the games open. "I, together with the BMPAP, are just here to give you opportunities to achieve your dream of becoming a world-class player like Efren 'Bata' Reyes." Ador Saavedra, Contributor

EFREN "Bata" Reyes (left) visits tournament sponsor Sen. Manny Villar at the opening rites.

Juntaphil age-group tennis unfolds Monday

THE FIRST SUN JUNTAPHIL METRO AGE GROUP TENNIS CHAMPIONships, featuring the country's top and rising junior players, gets going on Monday at the Filoil Memorial Tennis Center, Pasig Boulevard for the seven-day tournament ending May 15 is ongoing, according to the organizing Junior Tennis Association of the Philippines (Juntaphil). For inquiries, call 5304 45. Deadline is on May 1 at 12 noon.

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

SPORTS

FRI., APR. 30, 2009

BRITON Ricky Hatton strikes a pose for the media at the MGM Grand Garden Arena.

Roach dead sure of Pacquiao win

By Roy Luarca

LAS VEGAS—THEY'VE WORKED TOGETHER for eight years, but trainer Freddie Roach continues to be amazed by Manny Pacquiao's development as a fighter.

After working the mitts with his prized ward, once a one-dimensional heavy hitter who has evolved into the world's best fighter, at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood Monday, Roach couldn't help but feel proud.

"Manny was really, really good today, his focus was fantastic," said Roach. "That will win

MANNY Pacquiao trains at the IBA Gym in Las Vegas, after Tuesday's massive grand arrival ceremony at Mandalay Bay hotel.

on the fight. I just can't wait for this fight. I feel good powerful." Inc."

Pacquiao and British foe Ricky Hatton made spectacular public arrivals before cheering supporters on Tuesday in Las Vegas (See related story on page A11), starting the crosstown fan-fest world junior welterweight title showdown this Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

Roach, a three-time Trainer of the Year, said they have counted all the hours in Pacquiao's eight-week training camp and have figured out how to systematically bring down Hatton, who is still unbeaten at 140-0).

"The key to winning this fight is not to go fight him. (Hatton) straightforward and fight his fight, we give and take," Roach told Manila-based sportswriters on Monday.

"Give it to him and take it away. The in-and-out movement and side to side are the keys to this fight. We'll not fight the typical Pacquiao fight where we go forward. (Manny has progressed) beyond that. He knows how to fight both ways now."

According to Roach, Pacquiao will be instructing the rounds, but the tempo of the bout's still be up to Hatton.

"If (Hatton) comes in some forward, we'll let him come in to our traps," the trainer said. "If he wants to come, we'll work him in."

Roach also discussed the notion that the sassy but steel trainer Floyd Mayweather (is loosed their fighters will decide the outcome of the bout projected to make (Pacquiao richer by at least $15 million (about P720 million).

"The reason why we will win this fight is because I have the better fighter," Roach added. "It has nothing to do with the trainers. Sometimes he (Mayweather Sr.) gets under my skin, I'll talk back because I'm not gonna take it."

While Roach conceded that Hatton is also no green dope, he still believed Pacquiao will manage the veteran. "When the bell rings, Manny fights. I sit down, it's up to Manny to win the fight, and I'm sure he'll do it."

Roach said Pacquiao will open up right at the opening bell, but Hatton and Pacquiao him with his speed and movement.

"If Hatton starts swinging from his away, no problem, Pacquiao will befuddle him with his speed," Roach said.

Roach said that as soon as Hatton gets hit, Pacquiao will come forward. Just like he's trained to do.

When Hatton changes, Roach said they will "keep on blocking the combinations until he's knocked out."

(SEE Among those who met in person to greet Pacquiao during the grand arrival at the Mandalay Bay were the members of the national team under Philippine Olympic Committee Vice President Tom Carrasco Jr. The team was led by SBP director Butch Calo. Team Pilipinas's partner in the marketing program, Prime Magnolia and SMART, also prepared Lito Cayco and Team Pilipinas mascot Pilipinito. (SEE page A11 for more photos of the arrival ceremonies) (SEE roadmap of D-Day and more pix) A11)

Manny can't fight, says Hatton trainer

By Roy Luarca

LAS VEGAS—FLOYD MAYWEATHER SR. warns Ricky Hatton to an outmatch, specifically a tiger, in the ring. He envisions Pacquiao as a fighter, Hatton is also the epitome of what a boxing student should be—talented and a fast learner, according to the trainer.

In contrast, Mayweather holds Manny Pacquiao in low esteem. The American says the Filipino ring hero fights like an amateur despite being the world's best pound-for-pound fighter—a title once owned by his now retired son and namesake.

It's no wonder that Mayweather picks his pupil, Hatton, to win the May 2 showdown.

"Not only is Hatton bigger, stronger than Pacquiao, he is also smarter, slicker, clever, smoother," said Mayweather.

"If I have a fighter of eight years like Freddie Roach had Manny, I wouldn't be thinking so much about the shot because Manny still can't fight if you ask me," said Mayweather.

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DID YOU KNOW

THE 2006 Family Planning Survey showed Metro Manila had the third lowest contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) among mainstream (46.3%). The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao had the lowest (26%), followed by Ilocos (44%). Central Luzon had the highest CPR (58.9%).

Cyril L. Bondoc, Inquirer Research

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Sister of Parañaque solon arrested over ₱.5M debt

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POWER WINDOW MO

Trader files charges of estafa vs accused for issuing bouncing check

By Marlon Ramos

THE POLICE ARRESTED A SISTER OF PARAÑAQUE Rep. Eduardo Zialcita in Las Piñas City the other day after she reportedly failed to pay for P500,000 worth of jewelry, the Inquirer learned yesterday.

Senior Insp. Armando Clifton Empino, city police chief, said Concepcion Dalisay Trinos, 47, was arrested on Tuesday based on a warrant issued by Judge Rodolfo Morenda of the Las Piñas Regional Trial Court Branch 275.

The arrest warrant was issued on Jan. 28 after Trinos was charged with estafa over her alleged failure to settle her debt to a jewelry dealer, he added.

Based on the complaint of the dealer who was not identified, Trinos issued a check for P500,000 which bounced.

Ironically, Trinos had just attended a court hearing in connection with the estafa case when the was arrested by members of the Warrant Division of the Las Piñas police at around 2:05 p.m., Empino said.

"One of my men was able to identify her after an informant relayed the information that (Trinos) was attending a trial at the Las Piñas Hall of Justice," he told the Inquirer.

Trinos calmly went with the arresting team when they served the warrant to her, Empino said.

As of 5 p.m. yesterday, Empino said the lawmaker's sister was still detained at the police jail, although her lawyer had already paid the P60,000 bail.

"We will have to wait for a copy of the court order for her release before we can let her go," he said.

The Inquirer tried to talk with Trinos but she refused to be interviewed.

According to Empino, Trinos "was very careful" not to drag her brother's name into the controversy.

"She said that if she was not a sister of the congressman, the media would not bother to ask about her," he said.

"My brother has nothing to do with this. This is my personal problem and I will resolve this all by myself," Empino quoted Trinos as saying.

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Police forces beefed up for Labor Day protests

By DJ Yap

EASTERN POLICE DISTRICT director, Chief Supt. Lino Calimpan, said around 300 police officers from his district would be deployed to Manila and other neighboring cities where protesters are expected to gather on Labor Day.

He said that so far, he has no information about rallies being organized in the cities under his jurisdiction: Pasig, Mandaluyong, Marikina and San Juan, although the police police force would be on heightened alert on May 1.

According to Calimpan, another 300 police officers would be sent to secure and monitor the Labor Day demonstrations, particularly those in Liwasang Bonifacio, where they are expected to converge.

In a related development, the EPD was set to defend its title in the annual competition among the districts for the demonstration of skills in controlling civil disturbances.

Calimpan said that although the cities under EPD were not common venues for protests and mass demonstrations, the district usually does well in these competitions.

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'Meningo' death alarms staff at Makati hospital

By Alilace W. Lopez and Rachel Miranda

ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT A CASE of swine flu, officials of the Original Mahati were alarmed when a 35-year-old woman suspected of having contracted meningococcemia died a few days ago.

The death of Elsie Lopez on Monday afternoon prompted hospital officials to order the closure of the emergency room until May 3 to purge the area for a thorough cleaning of the facilities.

Lopez, a resident of Barangay Rizal, Pateros, died two hours after she was admitted to the Dalfish emergency room at around 2:30 p.m. Monday.

At the time of her admission, she had been running a temperature for over 24 hours and had some severe rashes, Dr. Dopeth delos Reyes said.

Dalfish head Jerry Pendra said they believed Lopez had contracted meningococcemia although they were still trying to confirm this through the results of laboratory tests.

Meningococcemia or cerebrospinal fever is an acute bacterial disease transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets from the nose and throat of infected persons. The mode of transmission is similar to that of swine flu.

The symptoms of meningococcemia are high grade fever, rashes, weakness, seizures and internal bleeding. Death usually occurs within 24 hours after onset.

Pendra stressed that there was no cause for panic as Lopez's death was believed to be due to meningococcemia and not swine flu.

GMA: All bark, no bite

FROM DAY 1, WHEN SHE took over from deposed President Estrada, President Gloria Arroyo has been on increasingly tougher around whose subordinates use clichés.

They neither respect nor fear her even if she humiliates some of them in public.

In a macho society, Ms Arroyo is like a dog that barks but doesn't bite.

A year away from the end of her term, she's now considered a washout even by many of her subordinates.

Her underlings ignored unsung dressdown in complete disregard of her.

Each department and bureau in the Arroyo administration is a fiefdom at war with others.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro's announcement of ambushes-slat postings of two top military officers cited people at the Department of Foreign Affairs who should have made the announcement in the first place.

The Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) claimed it had uncovered a plot to spring rebel military officers out of jail, angering the armed forces that said it would have been the first to know if there was such a plot.

When I was still in the good graces of the Arroyos, the President would ask me to explain the wrongdoings of some of her underlings so she would know whom to count from them.

When I told her about things that were overlooked by some of her subordinates, she would snap back: "Why don't you tell them yourself?"

Ms Arroyo is afraid of relinquishing her subordinates and they known it.

* * *

Speaking of PAOCC, how come some of its officials are reportedly a former gambling lord and an ex-convict?

What are their credentials to be in an undercover agency?

* * *

The Philippines is the only country in the world where

ON TARGET
RAMON FARIÑAS

Red Cross volunteers are kidnapped by rebels and held for a long period.

In war-torn Afghanistan, rebels kidnapped five Coca-Cola workers unless they didn't recognize, but released them as soon as they learned their mistake.

In the eyes of the world community, we're not only a country of cowards but also of savages who don't distinguish friends from enemies.

* * *

Many people change when they're in power.

The Roberto "Boyoie" Benabes I knew in the 1960s when he was still assigned in Pangasinan as a young Constabulary officer is no longer the Boyoie I see on television talking about the death of Ted Failon's wife.

Besides in the 1960s was self-effacing, humble and soft-spoken.

At present the chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), he seemed to have metamorphosed into an arrogant and a judgmental officer of the law.

Let me remind Boyoie of the saying: Greet the small people on your way up because those are the very same people you'll meet on your way down.

* * *

Of course, I know that Boyoie is under tremendous pressure from Malacañang to make Ted Failon look like a murderer, a wife killer.

After all, isn't President Gloria an adopted member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1970 to which Benabes belongs?

Boyoie, I know you still have the heart for the underdog as I know you back then.

Please, just be fair to Ted Failon.

Incentives offered for 'green' developers in QC

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE QUEZON CITY GOVERNMENT is offering incentives to property developers who will use environment-friendly materials in the rehabilitation or construction of buildings.

The 2000 "Green Building Ordinance" authored by Councilor Bernadette Herrera-Dy encourages land users, developers and planners to use "green" materials or methods in their construction projects.

"The fast industrialization of our friendly systems and technologies supports government efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and other hazardous emissions from buildings and other structures," Dy said.

Under the ordinance, building owners who construct or renovate a structure using environment-friendly materials or methods will be given a 25 percent tax credit.

On the other hand, owners of the building who make use of green practices will also be granted a tax credit of 15 percent which can be deducted from their real property tax due for that year.

Dy's ordinance was signed in to law by Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. last week as part of the city's fourth day celebration.

"This law is our gift to Mother Earth," he honestly said.

The ordinance defined a "green building" as an "integrated whole building approach to the planning design, construction, operation and maintenance of buildings and their surrounding landscape that help mitigate the environmental, economic and social impact of pollution."

In particular, the ordinance pushes for site conservation and sustainable planning, water conservation, energy efficiency and conservation, recycling, conservation of materials, resource waste resources and other facilities.

Building owners will also be required to apply for a permit from the Environment Protection and Waste Management Department before carrying out any renovation.

Int'l drug syndicate recruiting Pinoys as couriers, says Sotto

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A GROUP OF NIGERIANS WAS allegedly recruiting poor Filipinos to act as drug couriers to international drug couriers, according to Dangerous Drugs Board Chair Vicente Sotto III.

In a press conference in Quezon City yesterday, Sotto said he received information that members of an international drug syndicate reportedly being organized by Nigerian nationals were going around the provinces, offering jobs abroad as seamen.

He revealed that authorities were conducting surveillance operations in United Luzon where members of the drug syndicate were engaged in recruitment efforts.

The DDB chair said one of the group's new recruits, who is now under police protection, told them about the syndicate's activities.

Sotto said the witness said he was recruited by a neighbor and was sent to Bangkok, supposedly where he would meet his new job. He was later ordered by members of the syndicate to go to Brazil to deliver a package containing cocaine.

"The victim did not proceed to Brazil but instead sought the help of the Embassy and reported everything," he added.

The DDB chair said at least 10 Filipinos have been arrested and jailed since last year for drug trafficking and possession in Brazil.

Of those arrested, 12 were women while the rest were men.

On the other hand, 13 were now undergoing trial while 28 others had already been sentenced by the lower court to Brazil. Four cases, meanwhile, are on appeal.

"The cases of Filipinos charged in Brazil have dramatically increased and because of this we urge our workers not to get involved in this illegal trade," Sotto said.

He explained that most of those arrested were aware that they were carrying illegal substances.

Based on the records of the Philippine Embassy in Brazil, the arrested Filipinos were carrying at least a kilo of cocaine.

The Filipino, who was carrying a tourist visa, was arrested at the Brazil international airport.

Sotto warned that the Philippine government would not help those who get involved in illegal drugs cases.

"It's against government policy as help or appeal illegal drugs cases, and so is warning to those planning to get involved, you can on your own," he said.

METROBRIEFS

Camarines suicide cases down

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Iraq captures suspected leader of al-Qaida front

BAGHDAD—IRAQI AUTHORities on Tuesday displayed the first public image of a jailed man they claim is the leader of an al-Qaida front group that is believed responsible for some of Iraq's most deadly bombings.

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the head of the Islamic State of Iraq—shown in the photo with a close-cropped beard and black T-shirt—was reported arrested last week in what could mark a setback for Sunni insurgents trying to intensify attacks after a relative lull.

But the capture or death of other high-ranking insurgent figures in the past has done little to undercut extremists' ability to carry out attacks.

A variety whose statements are widely read on Islamic websites, Hisham Hasan al-Rahman, significant insurgent groups were not certain the man captured was Al-Baghdadi.

Regardless, he said, the "death of the leaders or their arrest will never halt the march of jihad, as holy war and victory."

Authorities said Al-Baghdadi had provided tips that led to the breaking of a bombing cell believed to be planning attacks to coincide with Saddam Hussein's birthday on Tuesday.

AL-BAGHDADI

Al-Baghdadi's capture was announced by the Iraqi government last week but the claim met with skepticism due to doubts announcements in the past that have proven false. The United States Defense Department said it still could not confirm the report.

Iraqi military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi said the government was certain the man arrested on April 25 was Al-Baghdadi and showed the picture of a man with short hair and downcast eyes.

Al-Moussawi offered no other proof of identity saying the investigation was ongoing and security forces were still trying to glean information from the detainee.

Pentagon spokesperson Bryan Whitman said he could not confirm Al-Baghdadi's capture and described as "fairly accurate" a statement that every day that goes by without a confirmation increases the suspicion that it's not him.

Iraqi authorities hailed the purported arrest as a major victory for Iraqi forces ending from assassination that they are not prepared to take over their own security in the wake of a series of high-profile attacks.

However, the killings and capture of insurgents in the past, including the 2006 death of the head of al-Qaida in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, have failed to slow the insurgency.

The deadliest bombings in more than a year occurred last week after Al-Baghdadi was purportedly caught, with more than 150 people killed over a period of ten days.

Iraqi officials also have reported Al-Baghdadi's arrest or killing before, only to have say they were wrong. AP

5 French killed in US bus crash

HOLBROOK—A BUS CARRYING French tourists overturned on an overpass in central California, killing at least five and injuring dozens.

Investigators were still trying to determine the cause of crash on Tuesday afternoon on US 101, but said the tour bus appeared to be the only vehicle involved.

The nation's Orion Pacific line lay on its side after crashing into the guard rail on the two-lane southbound overpass in Holbrook, about 160 kilometers southeast of San Francisco.

The crash ejected four passengers from the vehicle, sending one over the side of the road and onto railroad tracks below, said California Highway Patrol spokesperson Brian Ware.

"It's a tragedy," Ware said. "It's certainly one of worst I've seen in a long time."

The passengers that fell to the railroad tracks and two others died at the scene, said Matt Carroll, a spokesperson for the Monterey County Office of Emergency Services. Two more passengers died in hospitals.

A total of 36 people had been on board—34 French tourists, a Canadian tour guide and an American bus driver, Ware said.

Four of those injured were under the age of 18, including a 13-year-old girl who was one of seven persons airlifted to hospitals in Fresno and the San Francisco Bay area. The driver was among those who received the crash, according to the CHP.

Jacques de Nesty, a spokesperson for the French consulate in San Francisco, said authorities had notified his office that the crash involved French citizens, but said he had no further details. Officials from the consulate reached the scene of the crash late Tuesday. AP

THIS handout photo released on April 28, by a research team at the Seoul National University in Seoul shows the world's first transgenic dogs containing a fluorescent protein which makes them glow red under ultraviolet light. AFP

S. Korean researchers clone glowing puppies

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREAN SCIentists said on Wednesday they have created dogs that glow red by using a cloning technique that opens the way for research into human diseases.

The four cloned beagles known as Puppy—Ruby Puppy—contain a fluorescent protein that makes them glow red under ultraviolet light. Even in daylight, their skin and claws appear pink.

Scientists said the creation of the glowing pups shows it will be possible to implant genes related to human diseases into dogs for research purposes.

"They are the world's first transgenic dogs," Professor Lee Byeong-cheon who heads the Seoul National University (SNU) team told AFP.

"This means we'll be able to switch genes in dogs for genes related to human diseases such as Parkinson's Disease for research," he said, adding that dogs suffer from 229 illnesses that also afflict humans.

The team created the beagles by infecting dog fibroblast cells with a virus that inserted the fluorescent gene into the cell nucleus.

The nucleus was then transferred to another dog's egg cell whose nucleus had been removed. The cloned embryo was implanted in a surrogate mother.

Six female cloned beagles, all with a gene producing a fluorescent protein, were born in December 2007. Two died and four survived.

The experiment was only published this month.

"Fluorescent cats, mice and monkeys have been produced but dogs remain one of the most difficult animals for transgenic engineering while they have many diseases similar to humans," said Park Se-pill, a cloning expert.

"This is an important achievement that paves the way for gene-targeting in dogs," Park said.

In December 2007 other South Korean scientists claimed a world first by manipulating a fluorescent protein gene to dose glowing cats.

Lee's team earlier produced the world's first cloned dog, Snuppy.

Lee was an aide to Hwang Woo-suk, who was hailed as a national hero until an inquiry ruled that some of Hwang's work on stunning embryonic human stem cells was fake.

However, Lee's work in creating Snuppy Unrad Natural University puppy) has been verified by the university and other authorities. AFP

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The WORLD
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North Korea threatens to conduct 2nd nuke test

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA ON WEDNESDAY threatened a nuclear test unless the United Nations Security Council apologizes over sanctions, which some analysts said confirms the isolated state's determination to have an atomic arsenal.

The threat added to mounting tension in economically powerful East Asia following the North's April 5 rocket launch that the United States and other governments said was the disguised test of a long-range missile.

"In case the [UN Security Council] does not make an immediate apology, the DPRK [North Korea] will be compelled to take additional self-defensive measures in order to defend its supreme interests," the North's foreign ministry spokesperson was quoted as saying by the KCNA news agency.

"The measures will include nuclear tests and test-firings of intercontinental ballistic missiles."

The South Korean, Japanese and Chinese foreign ministries had no immediate comment.

The Security Council imposed sanctions on North Korea following a ballistic missile launch in July 2006 and a nuclear test a few months later.

After this month's rocket launch, it called for the sanctions to be tightened.

The impoverished North has lashed out at the measures, saying it would boycott six-party disarmament talks and bolster its nuclear deterrent.

At the weekend, it said it had started extracting plutonium from spent fuel rods as it restarted its atomic plant.

That announcement came hours after a UN Security Council panel placed three South Korean firms on a blacklist for aiding Pyongyang's missile and nuclear programs.

"The reinforcement of the list is North Korea is not on becoming a nuclear power and to accomplish that, more tests are needed," said Chung Liangui, an expert on the North at the Central Party School in Beijing. "Our nuclear test isn't enough. There'll be more nuclear tests and more missile tests."

North Korea has pushed to be recognized as a nuclear state in an attempt some analysts say is to boost its negotiating position with the US, a country that Pyongyang believes will never otherwise recognize it as a proper bargaining partner.

"I don't think it's a matter of negotiations ... North Korea already has a plan. I think they will do it (try to build a nuclear arsenal) anyway," said Park Sung-ho, a director of the Asia Strategy Institute in Seoul.

Some other analysts said the North may be merely turning up the rhetoric and that it would be too costly for it to go through with an actual nuclear test.

"It's drawing its environment and feeling many about its threats being considered as all hacking and so taking after a series of unsuccessful experiments, and that's why it has made a more heightened threat this time," said Lee Dong-bok, a senior researcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Reuters

Obama marks 100th day in office

OBAMA

WASHINGTON—BARACK OBAMA marks his 100th day in office on Wednesday with a trip to the United States heartland and then a prime time press conference to collect on his presidency's turbulent beginnings.

Since taking office on Jan. 20, Obama has battled the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, shifted the US military posture in Iraq and Afghanistan, and shown the world a different face of America in its first black president.

And that soon not enough, he now faces a deadly new challenge in the form of a swine flu outbreak that health authorities fear could explode into a global pandemic.

Against that background, Obama will set out from the White House on Wednesday morning for St. Louis, Missouri for a town hall meeting that will offer a chance to put his new perspective on his first 100 days.

He then returns to Washington for a nationally televised press conference where he is certain to be grilled about huge challenges that face the country on many fronts.

"There's always room for improvement," Obama's spokesperson Robert Gibbs told reporters, giving his boss a super cool grade of "B plus." "I think the president and the administration are pleased with what has been done in the first 100 days if you look at it measuring result forming, increased financial stability, [and] the passage of a recovery and reinvestment plan," he said on Monday. AFP

Flu Doctor says 'Preparedness Comes First'

By: Gretchen Laurel

Amidst rising global and health concerns raised in light of the Mexican Swine Flu outbreak, local flu doctor and pediatric infectious disease specialist Dr. Nancy Bermal has one prescription-preparedness comes first.

"We should be worried in the sense that we have to prepare for it--but not to the extent that we have to panic." Dr. Bermal says that this preparedness that Filipinos should exercise must be rooted in two things--awareness and good hygiene practices.

Be Aware

"It's important to read the newspapers and to know what's going on in other countries," citing the most recent Swine Flu mortality count of 68 casualties and 1,000 cases as an example. "But what's more important than identifying those numbers, is knowing how to differentiate between the three most 'visible' types of flu-the seasonal flu, the avian flu and the swine flu."

Dr. Bermal explains that flu viruses commonly circulate in the human and animal environment. Seasonal flu is caused by flu viruses that change to spread in humans; whereas the avian flu is caused by flu viruses that affect birds and the swine flu is caused by those that affect pigs. She notes that the mixing of human and animal flu viruses can lead to the development of new viruses in which the human population has little or no immunity against.

Despite this, Dr. Bermal assures the public that the local health department has already been taking online measures to address the swine flu virus threat. "The preparedness that we're exercising is more on surveillance." At present, passengers coming from Mexico and other infected countries are screened for the flu. Those found to be infected will be quarantined at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine until primary tests of the said virus.

Be Clean

While local health officials are doing their part, the Flu Doctor also reminds the public to do theirs by practicing good hygiene and keeping their homes clean.

Flu is commonly spread through coughing and sneezing and to counter this, Dr. Bermal recommends what she calls the "cough etiquette." "Try simply means turning your head when coughing or sneezing and covering your mouth with disposable tissue." She also stresses the importance of frequent hand washing.

Dr. Bermal observes that surface cleaning is another important aspect in preventing flu strains. "Let's say you sneeze and then proceed to touch the doorknob or the table-you may not know it, but the virus or bacteria can be transmitted to that area." Because of this, she recommends cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, faucets/sinks, counter tops, telephones, light switches, bath tubs, garbage cans and shower curtains.

As a parting note to the general public, Dr. Bermal once again calls for preparedness tempered with sobriety. "The news has come out all over the media, but everybody should keep calm and educate themselves about flu and other infections as well. Of course, we have to do our part by maintaining good hygiene practices and to refrain from unnecessary

Prevent Flu from Spreading...

Use Lysol Disinfectant Spray.

IN THIS ISSUE

- **PSBank posts 21%** growth in Q1 net profit /B2
- **Peza sees higher** investments, exports in Q2 /B6

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nariano

BUSINESS

SM group to invest ₱25B in '09 projects

Higher capital expenditure budget despite global crunch

By Doris C. Dorotan

THE SM GROUP OF TAIPAN HENRY SY IS INVESTING ₱25 billion in the local economy this year to expand its retail, real estate, shopping mall, hotel and banking businesses.

This capital outlay budgeted by SM Investments Corp., the holding company of Sy's SM group of companies, excludes another ₱7 billion that its mall development arm SM Prime Holdings Inc. plans to spend to put up new malls in China, SMIC president Harley Sy said yesterday in a briefing after the firm's annual stockholders' meeting.

The domestic capital expenditure (capex) planned for this year by the SM group, which has historically in-

BREAKDOWN B2

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as of 5 p.m. April 29, 2009

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(For more market reports see Page B3)

Stocks end lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.12 PERCENT lower yesterday, pulled down by slumping markets overseas, continuing bad news regarding swine flu and weakness in US banks, dealers said.

The composite index closed 2.46 points lower at 2,081.06 while the all-shares index dropped 0.09 percent to 1,141.30.

Volume totaled 3.470 billion shares worth ₱1.68 billion.

There were 42 gainers, 33 losers and 41 unchanged.

"Other markets are down also so that is affecting our market," said Marissa Lindergar of Regina Capital Development Corp.

She also cited "the swine flu problem" and reports that some US banks may need more capital infusions.

The market "will probably go sideways right now until we get fresh news." But the index is "still new 2,000 points so we are above the support level. The bias is still for an upward movement," Lindergar said.

She added that property shares were up on rumors of cash dividends and stock rights offerings.

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE Co. lost 0.56 percent to ₱2,140 while Globe Telecom Inc. slipped 1.33 percent to ₱885.

Megaworld, Filinvest Land Inc. gained ₱0.2 percent to ₱4 centavos while fellow real estate firm Megaworld Corp. rose 0.6 percent to ₱2 centavos. AFP

No urgency for rate cuts, says BSP

By Dorian L. Lucas

LOCAL BORROWING COSTS MAY BE NEAR-ing their bottom after a string of interest rate cuts as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said that there was "ample liquidity" in the financial system.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said he does not see an urgent need to provide more liquidity into the market's more than ample rate "awash with cash."

"There is no immediate need for any [monetary] easing," he said.

Some central bank watchers believe that interest rates may be cut further especially as the inflation rate – BSP's main consideration in deciding on the level of its overnight borrowing rate – to help lure lagging demand across the economy.

Expectations of further interest rate reductions were fed by statements made by BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo, who said a day earlier that the policy-making Monetary Board may consider additional easing measures like further rate cuts, an expanded budget for BSP's short-term peso rediscounting facility or even a reduction in banks' reserve requirements.

At present, the central bank's key interest rate stands at 4.5 percent—a 17-year low—after the BSP implemented a 25-basis point reduction two weeks ago. The Monetary Board's next scheduled review of its interest rate policy is May 28.

Since December 2008, the BSP has reduced its interest rates by a total of 150 basis points to help the local economy cope with the global crisis.

Tetangco said he wants to keep interest rates at a level that are conducive to economic growth, but at the same time,

NO URGENCY B2

PSBank posts 21% growth in first-quarter net profit

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK, THE Metrobank group's thrift banking arm, posted a 21-percent year-on-year growth in first-quarter net profit to P503.75 million as core business expanded while asset quality improved despite the generally gloomy outlook on the domestic economy.

Philbank president Bernard Garcia II told the Philippine Stock Exchange that the banks' net interest income rose 24 percent to P1.04 billion from the same period last year with strong growth coming from its loan booking during the first quarter.

"Our first quarter results set us well on the path of growing our net profit to P1.1 billion (37 percent growth) this year," Garcia said.

Net interest margins, the difference between income produced by a bank's earning assets and interest paid to depositors, increased to 5.3 percent from 4.9 percent due to the growth in investments.

"The double-digit growth in the first quarter of 2009 affirms strategic efforts we have taken in anticipation of any lingering effects of the global economic crisis. We're pleased to note that net profit increased by 21 percent in spite of higher provisioning," Garcia said.

Gross loans surged 37 percent from a year ago, fueled by consumer loans, which grew 16 percent. The bank reported that demand for auto loans remained good although mortgage loan releases slightly eased during the first three months.

Philbank also reported a decline in non-performing loans as a ratio of total loans to 2.6 percent from 6.2 percent, aided by its improved uncollected collection processes.

"We are pleasantly surprised with a decline in loan defaults in both our auto and mortgage portfolios. Worst case fears of rising defaults owing to the global economic crisis has not happened. As a defensive measure, we aggressively increased loan provisions, raising our provisioning coverage to 63 percent from last year's 47 percent," Garcia said.

Philbank also posted a 23-percent year-on-year growth in deposits in the first three months. Quarter-on-quarter, deposit build-up was up 9.5 percent.

Sees P1.1-B net income for 2009

Terrorist attract

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bautista III

THE PUBLIC IS AGAIN IN TERROR of soaring fuel prices. Smartly, as shown in media reports, the issue is attracting certain politicos to switch to the attack mode.

Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, who is said to hope to run in the 2010 presidential election, for instance is eyeing the DOE into pieces.

That's the Department of Energy, headed by Secretary Angelo Reyes, the former AFP chief, who in turn is rumored to be teammated in running in 2010 too.

In effect, Escudero is blaming the DOE for the new round of fuel price increase, saying that the department should check the greed of the oil companies.

Secretary Ralph Recto, who was recycled by Gloria into Senate chief after he lost his re-election bid for the Senate in 2007, also made noises against DOE.

Recto swore that, based on his own brilliant judgment, the price of gasoline is 6% a liter more than it should be.

In short, the oil companies are deceiving the public, and the DOE is not standing idly by, or something like that.

That, obviously, is a popular stance.

* * *

NOW I AM thinking that, perhaps, our beloved politicos just threw the so-called Oil Deregulation Law into the garbage bin.

That law liberalized the oil business in the country, in which prices were under government control since the 1970s.

And so, if I am not mistaken, fuel prices can go up or down, and the DOE cannot do anything about it except perhaps say.

The Oil Deregulation Law precisely took the DOE out of the fuel price picture. It is up to the oil companies, actually.

But is Escudero ready to cross swords with the oil giants? Hmm, the DOE and Reyes must be easier targets for political rhetoric, you think?

* * *

THE DOE can simply monitor fuel prices to ensure that the oil companies do not engage in predatory or cutthroat pricing.

Yes, I know—that they do not sell at prices below cost to kill competition, or that they do not agree on pegging prices uniformly among themselves.

Not too long ago, Reyes actually commissioned the SGV and the University of Asia and the Pacific to do a study on fuel prices.

The study commissioned on Petron and Pilipinas Shell, the two largest oil companies in the country.

It pointed that data from 2005 to 2008 suggested that fuel prices did not go up as fast as the prices of crude abroad.

Which of course meant that, during those years, the profit margins of the oil companies really ate up.

It noted that the price of Petron stocks at the Philippine Stock Exchange would readily bear out such an observation.

And so the study concluded that if oil companies were "overpricing," there still should (should) show up in higher profits.

That is the kind of information that DOE's Reyes gets from the academe-and consulting firms.

* * *

I HEARD that Reyes sor of, well, "lambed" Nada's Russia in a conference with the oil companies.

Well, the former senator perhaps can present his calculations to the oil companies here in here. You know—in media mine!

Will there any "yes?" I don't think he has any choice.

* * *

THE LOLA at the Palace, from what I hear, gave me order to all concerned to finish the MRT-LRT connection on Edsa (between Shaw-mente and North Avenue) well before the 2010 elections.

In other words, the President wants the trains running by then.

It is good for the Lola's image. Then, it also enhances the chances of her anointed candidate for presidency.

I'm afraid it is not going to happen, to it is, the inevitable of the construction has already been wrecked.—i.e. DELAY.

You see, the original design put the station on the "Eastwing" mall of Ayala Land, where the MRT station is located presently.

So and behold, something happened on the way to the construction site, and the station should now rise up at the "SM City" mall of tanjoan Henry "Tenang" Sy.

What happened there?

* * *

FOR THE information of CAP clients, I received word that the company has some 334,000 checks ready for release to about 147,000 plan holders.

They must go to any of the 32 offices of CAP all over the country or the "paying centers" in different cities.

Better yet, they can visit www.cap.com.ph for a list of names of plan holders whose checks are ready for release at the paying centers.

From what I heard, CAP still has some 26,000 unclaimed checks worth P22 million.

The CAP announcement, if I recall right, followed its sale of MRT-Ilaha (railway) bonds to the government.

As a special condition, the CAP board approved the resolution to use the proceeds as payment to plan holders.

Now, despite all the hullaballoo that pre-need education plan industry got, I still think it did a pretty good job for the past years before the CHED destroyed the industry.

For instance, through CAP educational plans, 80,000 students were able to go to college, with CAP disbursing some P125 billion worth of benefits.

Never no another sector that did all that.

PSE taps gov't TV station for education drive

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (PSE) and up with the official government television National Broadcasting Network (NBN) to implement anytime May 4 an aggressive stock market education campaign for the masses.

The PSE yesterday signed a memorandum of agreement with NBN, which owns TV stations channel 4 and more than 50 provincial radio stations, to broadcast about the stock market. Specifically, NBN will display the PSE's index during the morning hours on national TV and provide a 30-minute spot three times a week for the local bourse. PSE president Francis Lim said in an interview at the signing program.

"Its important to involve the government channel to demystify the stock market to the people," Lim said during the signing ceremony.

"This (public education) is an area where our stock market is failing. Not even one-half of one percent of 90 million Filipinos are actively trading in the stock market, whereas in other markets, 20-30 percent invest in stocks," Lim said.

Jose Isidoro, general manager and chief executive of NBN, said media have not done enough to help the masses attain a higher level of understanding about the stock markets. "It (its stimulus) is let done. Fortunately, we still have time," he said.

Doris C. Dumlao

SM group to invest . . .

From page B1

soared heavily even in economic downturns, is higher than the P140 billion disbursed last year.

SMPH will contain the bulk of group-wide capital expenditures this year with a total budget of P1.2 billion, followed by condominium development unit SM Development Corp. with P7.1 billion.

SM Land Inc., which launches the group's commercial property development, finishing them for business process outsourcing, or BPO office buildings), has a budget of P21.7 billion.

SM Land executive vice president Jocelyn Lucio said the company would break ground this year for Pasticcini Center, the second office BPO buildings planned in the SM City of Asia complex.

"This will be an iconic and modern building that will add on the strong commercial and residential complex. The construction of our ferry terminal project will also commence this year, for completion in 2010, affording us a direct ferry connection to Manila, Cebu and Davao," Lucio said.

Another P1.1 billion will be spent for the hotel business, a core division within the company. The remainder of the capex will go to other businesses such as retail and banking (Banco de Oro Unibank and China Banking Corp.).

For 2009, SM's retail merchandising group plans to open 14 SuperMetro branches, two SM Supermarkets, four SM Hypermarkets and two SM Department Store.

The SM non-food retail group, which is mainly the SM Department Store chain, expects to add 43,000 square meters in additional selling space this year for the new SM shopping malls in Naga, Bacolod and Bicutan.

Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co. expects for this year is expected to be based of rising internal funds.

No urgency . . .

From page B1

enough to deter any resurgence in inflation should it unexpectedly pick up.

Nonetheless, the BSP chief did not completely rule out further rate cuts even as he hinted that further reductions may be more temporal.

Tetangco said that inflation this April may likely average between 4.3 and 5.4 percent, compared to March's lower than the consumer price upsurge of 6.4 percent in March.

RP cracker maker takes a crack at Japan market

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL BISCUIT MANUFACturer Monde MY Sun Corp. has inked an agreement with Japanese confectionery producer wholesaler and retailer Yoshiya Co. Ltd., enabling the Philippine firm to export its products to Japan.

With the deal in place, Monde MY Sun can offer its Sky Flakes and MY Sun Graham to the Japanese market. These products, the company said in a statement yesterday, were the specific brands that Yoshiya chose to market because of their quality and taste.

"We forwarded samples with the required ingredients and waited for (Yoshiya's) approval before we proceeded," Monde MY Sun export officer Arnold Tinsioco said.

Tinsioco did not specify how much the initial shipments was worth and how big the volume was.

The partnership was forged through the guidance of food export Makoto Nakamura, who got acquainted with the Monde MY Sun brands at the International Food Exhibition (Ifex) Philippines in 2008.

Nakamura visited Ifex 2008 to identify Philippine manufacturers that had the potential to make it in the Japanese market.

Following initial talks with Monde MY Sun executives, Nakamura introduced the company to Yoshiya.

Although the amount of business is still small at this moment, we do hope that their business transaction and good relationship will grow steadily," according to the Asian Japan Center, the organization that brought Nakamura in the country.

Apart from Japan, Monde MY Sun also has the United States, Europe, the Middle East and parts of Africa in its export markets.

Its 2008 brought together 382 exhibitors and 1,382 buyers from Japan, China, Europe and North America. The show generated P30 million worth of booked and negotiated sales.

UK firm to invest P300M in IPVG

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE UK-BASED GLOBAL Emerging Markets (GEM) group is set to invest up to P300 million in publicly listed technology firm IPVG Corp.

IPVG announced yesterday that it had executed an investment agreement granting GEM Global Yield Fund Ltd. to subscribe to new shares in IPVG, as well as to purchase from existing shareholder Elite Holdings Inc. shares worth up to P300 million.

The agreement likewise provides IPVG to issue to GEM one or more warrants to subscribe for up to 30,000,000 shares in the company.

The proceeds will be used to fund IPVG's future active and organic expansion of its existing subsidiaries, the company said.

"Despite a challenging global macro environment, this deal is evidence that well-run companies can attract smart capital," IPVG chief executive officer Victor Gonzalez said.

The GEM group is a $2.7-billion alternative investment firm engaged in the management of a diverse set of investment tools centered on emerging markets all over the world. The UK-based fund has offices in London, New York, Paris and Hong Kong.

IPVG is currently in the business of IT&T, online gaming, business process outsourcing, payment solutions, mobile content development and digital animation.

It has been expanding operations and now has eight subsidiaries in the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN CARLOS, INC.

NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS OF PRE-EMPTIVE RIGHTS OFFERING

On 24 April 2009, the Board of Trustees of the University of Singapore, Inc. (the "Corporation") approved resolutions to increase the Corporation's authorized capital stock and it was been finalized that Thousand (70,000) new shares of stock with a par value of Ten Thousand (P10,000.00) pesos each (the "Offer Shares").

All stockholders of record may subscribe to the new shares of the said plan at the rate of Ten (10) new shares for every One Hundred (100) shares of stock owned by the stockholder as of 30 April 2009 (the "Offer Period").

Interested stockholders may subscribe to new shares by executing and filling with the Corporation, through similar notice, Mr. Mario M. Roby, Jr. of University of Singapore, Andres R. Bonifacio City, Pangasinan, their application to subscribe to new shares and paying in full the subscription, during the Offer Period. The required forms are available at the main office address.

Any subscription to new shares under this pre-emptive right shall be subject to approval of the various other authorized capital stock and corresponding amendment of the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation, by the stockholders and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

For more details on the rights offering, please contact Mr. Mario M. Roby, Jr. at telephone numbers (032) 520-0000 or (0918) 000-0000.

(signed)
MARIO M. ROBY, JR.
Corporate Secretary

BUSINESS

Peza sees higher investments, exports in Q2

Orders started coming in, business expansion seen to begin

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER REGISTERING A 50-percent drop in investments in the first quarter, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority expects the second quarter to be much better, with demand for the country's products starting to pick up.

In an interview yesterday, Peza Director General Lilia de Lima said the electronics and semiconductor sector, which accounted for the bulk of the country's export dollars, was showing signs of recovery.

She said that during the general membership meeting of the Semiconductors and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc. last Monday, the mood of the members was upbeat, indicating better times ahead.

"I think we have bottomed out. The orders are starting to come in," she told reporters at the sidelines of the Peza investors' Recognition Day yesterday. "Companies have said they would start to expand."

An American information technology firm, she revealed, had committed an investment of $900 million.

She declined to name the company, saying only that it had an existing business in the Philippines.

Peza's optimism is also being fueled by the fact that developers were still registering projects that were expected to generate more new investments, jobs and exports, she said.

One such project, she said, was spearheaded by the University of the Philippines in Los Baños.

The project, which was approved during Peza's last board meeting, involved the development of a 20-hectare IT park and a 126-hectare agro-industrial park close to UPLB's sprawling campus.

Funding for the project would come from UPLB, the government and a private sector partner that the state university will choose through a bidding, she said.

UPLB has yet to determine the cost of the development.

In the meantime, the Peza board named a new special economic zone, the Kanunga Special Economic Zone, in accordance with Executive Order 683.

EO 683 called for the development of special economic zones near or adjacent to geothermal energy sites in the country.

The 30-hectare Kanunga economic zone, located near the Leyte Geothermal Energy Development Corp.'s Cuarto geothermal power facility, is intended for companies involved in manufacturing, De Lima said.

About P246 is needed to develop the economic zone, she said. This amount would cover land development, utilities and administrative expenses.

Mass housing market still robust, says FLI

By Dimbri L. Lucas

SALES OF PUBLICLY LISTED Filinvest Land Inc. in the expensive Filipino community remain strong despite the global economic crisis, as FLI caters mainly to the mass housing market, to head said yesterday.

Because of this, FLI, the real estate firm of the Gokongwei family, will launch 20 new projects worth P7.4 billion this year. This is higher than the P6.6 billion capital expenditure program of the company last year.

"So far, we're not even seeing a dip [in sales]; so there's nothing to recover," FLI president Joseph Yap told reporters during the company's annual stockholders' meeting in Makati City yesterday.

"The mass market is still quite strong," he added, pointing out that the crisis' impact was felt most at the higher end of the property market—a segment where Filinvest has limited exposure.

Yap said even sales to overseas Filipino workers remained robust, since most of their clients in this market—either the expatriate workers themselves or their local relatives—were end-users themselves, as much as 50 percent of the company's residential units are sold to OFWs and their dependents.

"The Philippines' main export numbers as well as the remittances for OFWs are in overdrive, and millions of Filipinos are losing their jobs worldwide," he said.

"Despite this, we believe that demand for [FLI's] mass housing business will remain strong," Yap said, explaining the resilience of this segment in the crisis. "Most of our customers are first-time buyers and, therefore, their purchase of a house is more of a need rather than a want."

Improvement in power supply quality sought

By Amy R. Remo

AN INDUSTRY GROUP IS SEEKing improvement to the quality of power supply in the country to reduce power-related costs and increase production of local industries.

Arthur N. Escalante, outgoing president of the Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers of the Philippines, said power quality refers to the kind of electricity supply reaching end-users.

An uneven supply of electricity can cause significant problems to increasingly electronic-driven systems—especially in sensitive industries such as manufacturing and semiconductor—by damaging the functioning of electrical devices.

"This translates to higher maintenance costs, additional expenses for replacement of electrical and electronic devices. It also results in production shutdown interruption and production inefficiencies, higher electricity bills, lower production output quality," the IIEE said.

The IIEE said the European Union-Asia Power Quality Initiative (EU-APQI), which was launched yesterday, could help "improve the quality of power in Asian manufacturing industries by creating awareness and building capacity on the technical, financial and managerial aspects of power quality."

A 22-month-long project, the APQI is a joint initiative of APQI Support Network, International Copper Association Southeast Asia Ltd. and the IIEE.

A core APQI group was formed, composed of representatives from the IIEE, Energy Efficiency Practitioners of the Philippines, National Grid Corporation of the Philippines, Manila Electric Co., Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc. and the University of the Philippines.

"We want to transform power quality from a simple concern into a sustainable advocacy," Escalante said.

Cement tariff back to 3% in June

WITH CEMENT PRICES REmaining high despite the scrapping of levies imposed on the product, the Department of Trade and Industry is set inclined to recommend an extension of the zero tariff regime for cement.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said that, in general, the government's thrust was to make commodity prices as reasonable as possible for consumers.

"For as long as it benefits the Philippine market and our consumers, I'll support it," he told reporters at the sidelines of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority's Investors' Recognition Day yesterday.

"But if I don't see prices increasing, I won't recommend (maintaining zero tariff). I'm not excited with it."

Executive Order 766, which Malacañang issued in November last year, scrapped the tariffs on cement for six months, or until June.

When the order lapses and it is not extended, a 3-percent levy will again be slapped on Portland cement from Association of Southeast Asian Nations member-economies and a 7-percent tariff will be reimposed on cement coming from other parts of the world. Abigail L. Ho

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Ming Tsai raves about Filipino food /F1

LIFESTYLE Food
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

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Crystal salt lamp, Crystal hot sauce and other bright new faves

KITCHEN RESCUE

Aggie Aguirre

My friends swear by the curative and calming properties of the Himalayan salt lamp

I FIRST CAME ACROSS A HIMALAYAN crystal salt lamp when I visited my friend Judy Ann, a cancer survivor of 17 years.

She had one in her living room and it was pretty. As we chatted, she stood up, rubbed her finger on it, then rubbed that same finger, now with salt granules on it, on a tiny nut on her arm.

I asked what she was doing. "That is a Himalayan Crystal Salt Lamp. I use it to calm me; it gives out positive energy. I rub the salt on my bites and stings, and it helps heal them fast."

Even if I didn't know what to make of it, I wanted a lamp for myself, more for the beauty of it, than to rub my cuts and stings or for positive energy.

CRYSTAL HOT SAUCE

That was the first and last time I saw one. This was over a year ago.

When Art Sioco, the man behind fresh wheat grass, brought in his Himalayan Salt Bar, I checked it out. To my delight I saw the lamp. I've always wanted, plus pink salt is all in vogue.

Art's curve-straight bar home to do "Salu," a solution made from large rock salt crystals mixed with water.

Take a teaspoon of the solution and mix it with a glass of water. Take in the morning to get your daily-needed dose of minerals and energy boost. (Himalayan salts supposedly contain 84 minerals and trace elements.)

I gulped mine down, as Art suggested. My brother and some friends did the same. I felt no boost, but my brother did. Psychological?

Without a doubt, salt has curative properties: salt and warm water to gargle for throat and mouth problems, water-and-salt solution for those with cough and colds, salt baths to smoothen the skin.

I guess it depends on what you believe. Staunch believers of natural and wholistic healing swear by it, while those who do not remain skeptical.

I find the salt beautiful to look at, especially on my salt grinder, with its pinkish hue. The flavor comes later, not when it touches the palate.

I like the idea that it has more minerals than regular salt, while visually perking up my dining table.

As for the lamp, it is wonderful. It relaxes me and I sneeze far less (a much better term than "cause it looks beautiful—hence my sense of coolness").

If and when I tire of the lamp, at least I will have eight kilos of great salt to cook, rub or bathe with.

For details, call 09.17.6588794, 4403933

Crystal hot sauce

Hot sauces can be sticky (some are just too spicy, others too tart. Still others are just not worth talking about. Of all the hot sauces I've tried, I like Crystal Hot Sauce best.

I first tried it at Jerusalem Restaurant in Ermita, Manila. It is so good, so well-balanced in

(BOTTOM) G1

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Mother's Day specials

LOAKURA OFFERS A SPECIAL MENU FOR MOTHER'S DAY. A LINEUP OF DISHES PREPARED BY CHEFS Godoldilday and Rudolf Rasnada. It includes a freshly baked bread selection; Crispy Salad Of Baby Arugula, roasted zucchini stuffed with coconut and parmesan; a choice of Grilled Salmon with Mushroom and Corn Crepes Laced with Spinach Sauce or US Steak Fritas with Steamed Asparagus and Mustard Cream or Pork Rotter on the side; complementary refills or cup of lemon and from the cellar of Maxima Cuddly Wines. Wineglasses and Cream, and coffee capping it off. Lamentaria at 6 Jakata Circle, Horseshoe Village, Quezon City. Call 724-4211 and 722-3186.

Dining Out

Cake and drink of the month

The Bellevue Hotel's drink of the month is Dreamch, a blend of pineapple, coconut and pink pomelo. Liquore Cocktail is cake of the month, a combination of truffles with a hint of rum topped with the fruits. Call 777-8888.

'Laing' tempura

Enjoy "Taste-of-the-Century Filipino Cuisine" at chef Rondel Go's Crisostomo restaurant at the new Eastwood Mall. Sample the Laing Tempura, fresh pili leaves wrapped in laing leaves, with a rich pilgrim sabing. Visit Crisostomo at G/F, Eastwood Mall Veranda. Call 709-2049 and 716-1693.

Malaysian laurlat

Malacca Malaysian restaurant offers a toasted-style feast. Starters are Satay Murtak with choices of beef or chicken, Popiah, Poi Tie, and Soup Tofu. Agare or Mutton Soup to ante the star. Main course includes Crispy Squid, Sambal Prawn, Beef Rendang, Hainanese Chicken, Ikan Head Curry, Kway Teow Goreng and Chili Crab with Salted Fish Vegetables. Dessert is a choice of Cendol and Potet Salad. Malacca is at G/F, Jupiter Place, 136 Jupiter St., Makati. Call 889-3587 or 843-1288.

Sweets and coolers

Pancake House is serving Fruity Flavors shakes this summer. Pina Banana Samba is a combination of pineapple, calamansi and banana. Pina Green Mango Tango has pineapple and green mango served in a salt-rimmed glass. Pina Watermelon Whirlwind is a mix of pineapple and watermelon juices. Cool Scoops desserts include Fruits and Flakes a la Monte—cereals, peaches, mangoes and apples, sprinkled on scoops of mango, strawberry and vanilla ice cream served with fresh milk—and Sticks Monkey Splits—chocolate and vanilla ice cream wedged between banana slices, drizzled with chocolate chips, chocolate syrup and nut pieces, and topped with peanut butter. Mix chick out Very Berry Crepes and Cheesecake Surprise. Pancake House now has branches in SM Manila, McKinley Hill in Taguig, and Capitol Greenhills in QC. Call 864-0988.

Summer milkshakes

Shakey's Summer Blends milkshakes are Coffee Chip, coffee-based milkshake blended with vanilla ice cream and chocolate chips; Caramel Swirl, vanilla ice cream with chocolate chips and caramel syrup; and Strawberry, Shakey's has more than 100 restaurants in key cities nationwide. Shakey's branches are in Baguio, Bagiuo, Tagaytay, Kalibo, Iligan, Cebu and Davao. Call 7777.

Steaks galore

Metro recommends for Mothers' Day Oyster Rockefeller with creamy hollandaise sauce topped with bacon, mozzarella and parmesan cheese; Metro Rubber Salad served with duck breast, walnuts, apples, tacoma and Metro's secret mayonnaise dressing. Metro's steaks are carved and weighed in front of diners before it is cooked—Angus steak, Wagyu in various cuts like Rib eye, Tenderloin, Striploin. Will eye "Cowboy," Rib eye with Bone, Porterhouse and T-Bone. Desserts include Chocolate bund chocolate cake, Tiramisu, Cheesecake and Midnight Chocolate monster cake. Metro is at 32 Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati City (889-3455); 38 Bonifacio Ave., QC (634-9134); and 4th Precinct, Barangka Ale-hong, Mandaluyo (777-9561).

Oyster parmigiana et al

Burgos's popular dishes are Oklahoma-style Grilled Baby Back Ribs, Country-style Fried Chicken, Friday Fish Fry, Seafood Aglio Olio, Spanish Grilled Salmon, Filet Mignon, Grilled Pork Chops, Grilled Squid a la Pobre, Oyster Parmigiana. Burgos also offers fruit juices in Orange, Mango, Pineapple, Calamansi, Cranberry, Four Seasons, shakes in Green Mango, Ripe Mango, Buko-Pan, Watermelon, Kiwi, Strawberry Blasco, and Elephant Chariot, Blue Bonanza, Cookies & Cream, Chocolate Milkshake, Marshmallow Foam smoothies. Visit Burgos at 7 Ilocos in Socorro City, Powerplant Mall in Rockwell, Makati; The Podium in Ortigas, The Promenade Mall in Greenhills, and SM City Manila. Call 914-1112, 556-4691 or 633-4258.

Spanish specials

Pablo Buenisca Spanish restaurant well mark its soft opening on May 8 at SM Mall of Asia. Specialties include Escudela del Chef, a mixture of prawns, smoked salmon, Jamon Serrano, chicken and cheese with bits of lettuce and your choice of dressing; Salamdina la Plancha, beef tenderloin grilled medium rare or well-done, served with your choice of sauce, and Lubina con Salsa de Gengibre, grilled fillet of sea bass topped with white wine mushroom sauce served with mashed potatoes. Call 521-4415/17 or 8821-7308833.

'Coco pandan halo-halo'

Buena restaurant offers for summer its re-fashionable of homemade coco pandan shredded with macapuno chambad, pinipig, langka, sweetened banana and coconut gel. Cuisine's other fix Mother's Day include kare-kare that comes with tokwa't baboy, green chicken tinola, seafoods adobong, amaalain'at ingnet, and monggonisa. Buena is at Greenbelt, Bonifacio Highstreet, Mandaluyo Global City, Taguig. For reservations, contact 556-0980.

New dessert

Abyss Barbecue offers Halo-Halo Caramel a la Mode for dessert—two slices of prepared halo-halo drizzled with homemade caramel sauce, served with a scoop of caramel-drizzled vanilla ice cream. Abyss Barbeque staples include Boneless Chicken Barbecue, Pork Barbecue, Grilled Liempo, Grilled Bangus, Grilled Pusit, and Grilled Tuna. Call 751-2346 or 0917-8650306, e-mail tinkabyss.reservations@gmail.com, visit www.tinkabarbecue.net.

Crystal salt lamp, Crystal hot sauce and other bright new faves

From page C1

flavor—hot with a tinge of sourness and sweetness. It is a condiment that enhances rather than overpowers.

This is with Jerusalem's Fried Goat Ribs, Tabbouleh and dipping sauce with lots of garlic...what a relisher. A must have for hot meat lovers! (For details, Khalil Darwish, 0917-9494-1311)

Hyatt's Pavilion

More like a fusion than a pavilion, this mention is really to define—cream filled with any meringue and super sweet nougats. Thanks to Hadie and Joan Abreu for this yummy person! Call 243-1234.

KRISTY'S Pavilion

Costa Brava cupcakes

I've said that Jodie's cakes hit the spot with me. In a world of choices, people now opt for something petroleum free, yummy person! Call 243-1234.

Jodie's cupcakes I find better than her big cakes, since every piece is stuffed with a generous icing filling. Try Caramel, Marshmallow, etc. Basic, everything in cupcake form that I've tried is simply fantastic! Call 09166572.

'Dalandan' juice recipe

I see a lot of dalandan in the market and it is my favorite thirst-juice—perfect for this heat. Can you share your dalandan juice recipe? —Mrs. Lagare

I love dalandan juice with mint. Easy-to-do recipe. It is so good!

Fresh Dalandan Juice with Mint

Combine 2 cups sugar and 2 cups water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Continue to simmer for 15 minutes until slightly thickened. Cool syrup. To cool syrup, add juice from 12 dalandans and mix well. Pour mixture in a pitcher and add the squeezed dalandan fruit—6 halves, seeds removed. Add a cup of mint leaves and 10 pieces ice cubes. Take the ice cubes to melt and pour in glasses filled with ice.

We now close schedules are out. The Gourmet Cookware Series for beginners and household cooks are ongoing; a new series on Cooking for Beginners is about to start.

On May 23, I am conducting a Food and History tour in Taal, the Grand Lady of Batangas, with heritage preservation advocate Jimmi Montenegro. For inquiries, call 0285-0565/0277-0868 (Cleto) or 0474-743-0908/2372-2865 (Jhun).

E-mail inquiries@inquirer.com.ph

Duck-beef kimchi, paella pasta and the perfect unagi

The Quiet Diner

Restos at a glance

Rating Index

Poor

Good

Excellent

We recently spent a fortnight sampling three varying cuisines at three different restaurants, one of them our favorite.

Ring Bee—No. 8009 Leviste, Bel-Air, Sta. Rosa, Laguna; call 049.5408895. On our given day, the drive both comforting and refreshing. We settled for lunch at Ring Bee—as it is hardcore chain. Just a Chinese restaurant.

Dining area—Crowded with lunch crowd, some families with children. The usual Chinese décor in red and black; no opaque with live fish in visible, and a bar/cashier section with glass windows shows the selections—pork, chicken, etc.

Staff—Quick and enthusiastic.

Service—Food comes fast. A cue with Chinese precision.

As the menu—As with any typical Chinese restaurant, the choices are dimsum, noodles, meats and other meat dishes, but just lean, vegetables and fruits noticed. There are at least 15 type of dimsum, including the favorite Hakaw (shrimps) and Shahe Fai. Of the meats and veg specialties, the **Duck and Beef Kimchi** got our vote. Ring Bee's Fried Chicken is like any other one would find in such eatery. Other items are **Sliced Beef Tenderloin** with slices of mango and the popular **Chinese-Style Beef Steak**. The tab averages P500-P600 per person.

Usual government taxes are included in the bill. Seniors get green dots due discount.

Rating

Pequeño Mio—Wee Gotc, Alabang, Filinvest Corporate City, Muntinlupa; call 7711294. The décor is Mediterranean. There is a second floor where private parties can be held.

Dining area—Lighting is rather subdued; atmosphere is homey, with ample space between tables. A chiller for desserts is at one end of the hall.

Staff—Most in their uniforms. One welcomes guests at the door and leads them to a table or to the second floor. Courteous and gracious.

Service—Regular, moderate pace.

As the menu—While the name of the eatery suggests Spanish cuisine, the menu includes Mexican and Italian dishes. However, the **Paella** is a must—either in **Mediterranean, Marinera, Negra** or **Combinacion**. **Bistec Salpicao** (beef, pork, chicken or tuna, but get the beef) is also served. Grill includes seafoods, chicken and pasta. The Mexican entry **Burrito** (mix of chili beef, chicken or a combination of both. Some have dishes on the usual, but the one entry **Paella Pasta**. International Buffet is from Monday to Friday at P399 a person—quite a steal.

Usual taxes are imposed. Senior discount unfortunately.

Rating

Omakase—Lower level, Cars Avenue Mkt; Madrigal Avenue, Alabang, Muntinlupa; call 7711443. If it is top-class Japanese food you're craving for, this is the place. The resto is almost always full despite having expensive choices.

Dining area—Done in dramatic black, including the wooden chairs. However, ventilation could be improved, as the odor would be rather irritating (like this group of women talking at the top of their voices while we were having our dinner).

Staff—Efficient, attentive and responsive to requests (such as when we asked for a change of table).

Service—Fast.

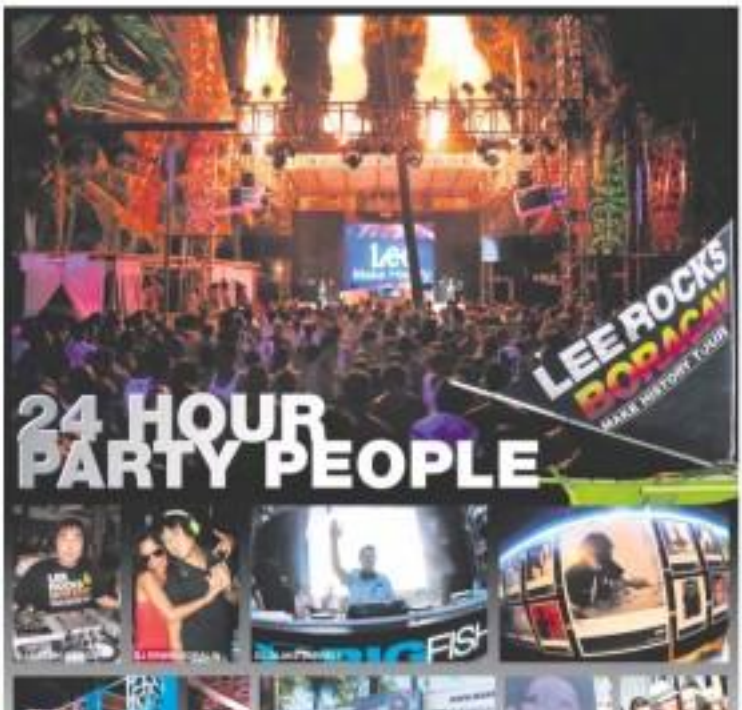
As the menu—Each plate is presented in a very creative and impressive way. The quality of ingredients is superior, especially the sushi and the sashimi, whether you had prepared or raw draped. The **Gindara Teriyaki** sizzles in the moments, and comes with a very flavorful sauce. The Tempura rock is perfect. Generous slices would surely love the Rib-Eye Steak. The sizes of the Fry-a Days as well.

Government taxes are added and senior citizen give due discounts.

Rating

SWEETS FOR MOM

Goldilocks offers heart-shaped polvoron topped with chocolate flowers or cassava hearts, as well as Cassava Puto, Hugo Angel Torte, version chocolate cakes and pastries.



At the 2nd installation of the Lee Make History Tour, the much-talked about photo story competition packed up its gear and flew south to set up shop on the sandy shores of Boracay. Building an interactive mobile gallery stash top studio/bar from the ground up, the massive all white organic structure featured the official photo entries of the Lee Make History campaign. A mass photo promo was already been chosen within Asia Pacific to be used in magazines and billboards as Ad campaigns. Elbowing their way to the coveted top five are three from the Philippines. Those compelling images and a host of other genuine photo perspectives made a stunning backdrop that covered the Gallery's wall inside and out. A virtual feast of stunning photography that managed to engage, connect and intrigue enough to vie for the grand prize of a whopping $40,000.

Lee Rocks Boracay was not to be outdone, it upped the ante with the famous sunset as the background. Year flowing deadly drinks and a teeming all night, packed-out, kick ass beach party with sexy-panic music from live DJ's Adrian Pisones for chill Thursday, Erwin Estrella for house Friday. The Easter party tradition, Saturday evening, lives on as Lee Rocks Boracay in partnership with BigFish brought in Bicky Puravet. The party to top or banner-raged into day with international DJ Shalar Jarrel busting out the best dance music that can super-serenity. Again action hot, hot bodies grooving and pumping their fists into the air. And for those with the post long holiday depression, Lee BigFish and HeadKandi still rocked the island with another outta beach party on April 17. Friday with fly-in Dus Away Herman and Jamie Richards.

Gatchin, the infamous party paparazzos, also brought in their chick crazy photographers who were on super-panic mode searching for the sexiest cats and the hottest chicks. Working along side with the Lee Make History campaign, Selected photos were posted on a live photo wall inside the gallery and uploaded to two outdoor spectacular LED screens. Like-day shopping find baths with larger than life image blow ups, party photos and portraits framed like winking bright billboards on Boracay's mini Eden. Definitely a first on the famous white strip, and surely not the last.

By now, only the sea-critters in the deepest part of the ocean escaped the madness surrounding the event to be seen and be in. And to see our yet The Lee Make History Tour is on a roll, expect the whole lock, knock and smoking barrel to be in your region soon. Lee indeed makes history by turning up the volume and shaking things up by celebrating music, fashion, photography and everything else in between.

Party-Pics (ed up): www.getnet.com.ph
The Lee Make History picture story competition is still open for entries. Log on to www.makehistory.ap.com for more details.

Intimate Secrets from Gigi Amore

The secret to looking great in any outfit is knowing your body and selecting the right intimate set that flatters you most. Gigi Amore at SM merges luxurious fabrics and sensual shapes for diverse looks that are sexy and flattering at the same time.

With its wide range of intimate pieces - from body shapers to pretty cotton pieces in floral prints to sensual boudoir sets in satin and lace - Gigi Amore gives you an ideal fit, the coverage you want, and a look all your own. Experience everyday comfort in sexy shapes with the ease of stretch that's flirty and totally fun.

Gigi Amore is exclusively available at the Ladies Wear Department of all SM Department Stores.

GARDEN Perky Gigi Amore lingerie blooms with pretty embroidered flowers on lace

DELICATE mesh and lace merge in chic lacely lavender bra and hiphugger set

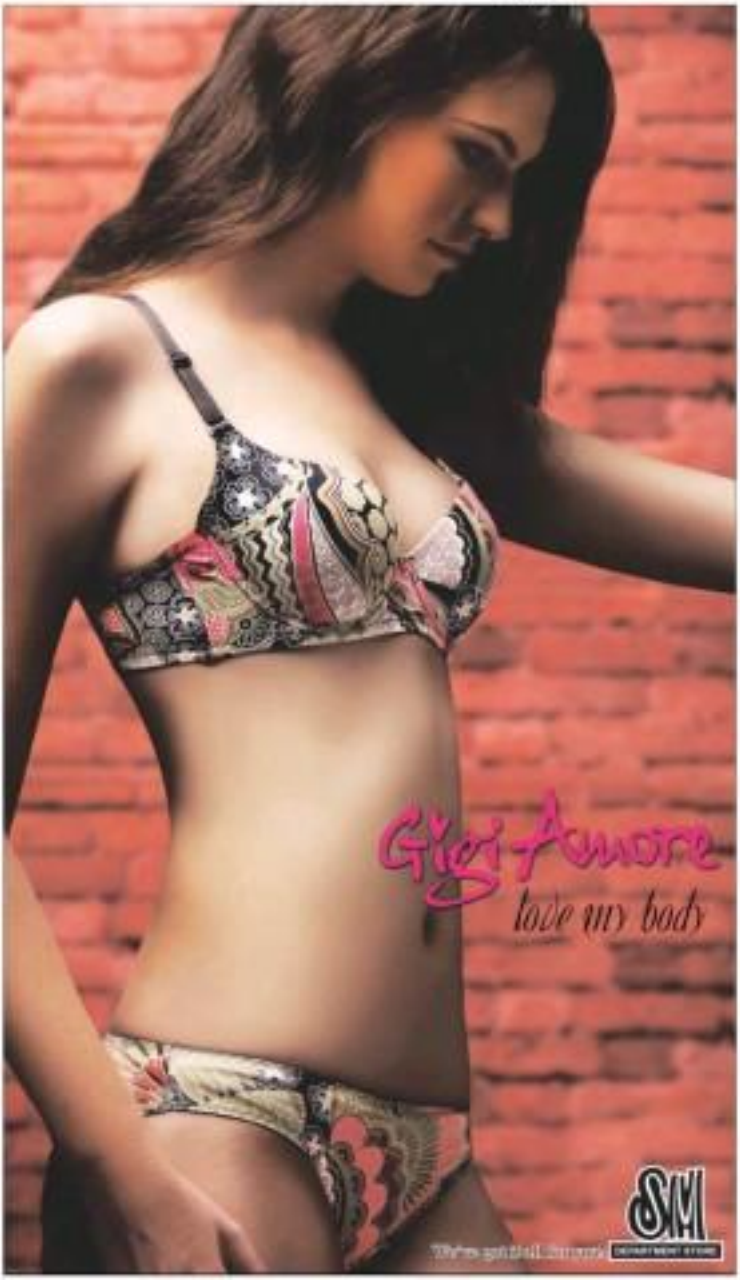
WHAT sets Gigi Amore brand lies on stunning collection of tastefully sensual lingerie perfect for your curves

PINK Feminine. Fresh and flirty in a pink floral bra and panty set with lace detailing

SPORTS Understated. Perky, flirty and sexily fun in a cup-to-cotton front closure, racer-back bra with matching panty

BLACK is beautiful. Sheerly feminine in a nude bra and panty set with lace accents

PRETTY Underwears from Gigi Amore



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SUPER BATCHOY

PEQUE Gallaga and Rory Uy Enriquez of Bacolod Super Batchoy

A foodie's Bacolod

Summer Escape Guide

By Reggie Aquino

Peque Gallaga says Bacolod cuisine 'doesn't fool around.' It's no-fuss, straightforward delicious cooking

MARINA, A *BALIKBAYAN* from California, has asked for dining destinations in Bacolod.

Let my good friend and connoisseur-food to, movie director Peque Gallaga, take her around the town's fiery food subdomain.

Welcome to Bacolod to most really intense by people and stuff yourself into a stupor. There's good eating anywhere you go to Bacolod, from a tapa hut turo-turo affair out in the Tinahanonon them to any of the dozen restaurants that cover Italian to Korean, Japanese and Indian, not to mention Chinese.

Bacolod restaurants don't fool around. They understand what home and nouvelle cuisine are all about, but they don't mess their time with too much of it. They know that diners pop in for six mids to die ella Baron and must, and confidently to generous helpings at reasonably affordable prices. What else can you ask for?

Here's a sampler of places you can't go wrong with...it would be impossible to list them all—but any of these establishments will give you a good reason to come back to our island.

Abuy's Lipsville Subdivision, Golden Fields, 034-4330780

Started out as an early breakfast joint for truckers, until all of Bacolod heard of it and it grew to the ultimate turo-turo emporium that

a roomer's on

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- Only one voucher may be used for each transaction.
- Discount vouchers will only be honored to participating outlets until July 30, 2009.

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SM DEPARTMENT STORE

Japanese Fusion and Fast-food Dishes

The Mayas Kitchen

The Japanese and Chinese styles of cooking have come up with delectable creations for consumers. The Mayas Kitchen offers the best of both worlds as it presents Japanese Fusion Cuisine and Fast-food dishes as prepared by Chef Sally Kamura. Rare research on the same day, find out how to maximize vegetable freshness and other vegetarian information, tonight now.

Japanese Fast-food and Fusion Dishes (May 4 to May 7, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.) Vegetarian Sushi, Vegetarian Maki, Vegetarian Sashimi, Shitake Gohan, Japanese sandwich, Japanese style, Spring rolls (Lumpia), Fried Nori (alternative), Chinese Dumplings (Siomai). P1,500

One Day Cooking Class: (May 12 (Sun) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Legal & individual materials to get started (eg. Chef's knife, measuring cups/spoons, etc.) Demonstration then small-scale production (hands-on), Lunch (eg. & LUNCH on food). Preparation of Popular catering dishes for Buffet, Cocktail & Takeout). P2,000

Italian Cuisine: (May 19 (Tue) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Techniques in preparing popular Regional dishes from Pasta, Pizza to Risotto as served in Italian Restaurants. P1,500

Classic Korean Cooking: (May 20 (Wed) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Kimchi, Chap-che (Noodle dish), Bulgogi (Roasted Korean beef) Bibimbap (Korean dish) & Others (Korean dishes) for vacation L. P1,500

Coffee 101: (May 21 (Thu) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Coffee History, Coffee Process, Varieties, Blending Brew, Coffee Types, Proper grinding, Techniques to a perfect cup, actual preparation of popular Coffee Concoctions. P1,500

Call 09178-5-MAYAS (09178-562927) or 0917-8-MAYAS (0917-862927) for more info. Or e-mail us at mayaskitchen@yahoo.com

SUMMER CULINARY WORKSHOP COURSES FOR KIDS AND TEENERS

Junior Culinary Workshop: (May 5-9 (T-F) 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. For kids aged 9-12 (who would like to learn about the basics of cookery & baking). Table Set-up & Serving. Basic including simple basics & Filipino dishes. Here is how to make Spaghetti Bolognese, Fried Rice, Pancakes, Fruit & Vegetable Carving, Simple Desserts, Pie Crust Cooking & Recipes of cookies, cupcakes & more including proper icing. P4,500

Young Chefs's Cookery: (May 12-16 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. For teenagers aged 13-16, above to learn about the basics of cookery & baking. Table Set-up & Serving. Basic including simple basics & Filipino dishes. Here is how to make Spaghetti Bolognese, Fried Rice, Pancakes, Fruit & Vegetable Carving, Simple Desserts, Pie Crust Cooking & Recipes of cookies, cupcakes & more including proper icing. P4,500

Young Chefs's Cookery: (May 19-23 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. For teenagers aged 13-16, above to learn about the basics of cookery & baking. Table Set-up & Serving. Basic including simple basics & Filipino dishes. Here is how to make Spaghetti Bolognese, Fried Rice, Pancakes, Fruit & Vegetable Carving, Simple Desserts, Pie Crust Cooking & Recipes of cookies, cupcakes & more including proper icing. P4,500

CERTIFICATE COURSES (TESDA Accredited)
Pre-registration required

Basic Culinary: (May 5-9 (T-F) 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Basic 10-12 (T-F) 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. for Career cooks & Entrepreneurs. Fundamentals & Intermediate Standard Techniques of preparing meats, from appetizer to dessert for Home & Institutional Style Kitchen. P5,000

Fundamentals of Pastry Production: (May 12-16 (Mon-Fri) 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Baking techniques and skills for cakes, pastries, breads, chocolates, sugar, breads, Fundamentals of cake decorating, Individual workshop on icing application & cake designing. P5,000

Advanced Cookery: (May 26-29 (T-F) 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. for Career & Professionals. Traditional & Regional Specialties & cooking preparations of World Famous & Authentic International Dishes. P5,000

For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen every Tues - Sat. at 03 Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. no.: 893-1585 or 0917-811-1585

Log on to www.themayakitchen.com or e-mail at mayaskitchen@yahoo.com

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No. 1

Abbott

BOB'S » the with fried onion rings

A foodie's Bacolod

Feast page 10 »

specialties is freshly caught seafood, such as blue marlin steaks with sealed in juices cooked at high temperature on one side and then gently finished on the other.

It also boasts of its fried (angel wing shells). Anything (scallops cooked in the same oil they fry their homemade garlic peanuts with) and a stylish inkwell of squid ink that regularly runs out early in the evening.

Aida's (Mansilum Country, Barkadan Drive Area)

Get to Mansilum Country at the Barkadan area beside the Barokel Plaza, is a huge row of restaurants that has many Bacolod *justifiably* renowned for its chicken inasal. And that's what you get here—all things chicken, with variations on the side. Check out reputably Aida's, which is right in the middle of this world of grilling and barbecuing.

Bob's (South Drive right in front of Riverside Hospital, 034-4342489)

Bob's is the epitome of down-home Bacolod home-style cooking, whether it's their soups like Batchoy and Pancit Molo, their gigantic chamber/pork with melted cheese, or their Baby Back Ribs and Sate Bake. In between there are little surprises, such as their tapsoo stuffed with *chorizo* and their huge Mongolian Barbecue or Hulo-Hulo Table. Desserts, pastries and breads from their pastry shop complete the experience. Bob's has been feeding Bacolod eaters since 1985 and, to wonder more, close you get up from a Bob's dinner table, you have the distinct sensation that you've been loved.

Café Uno (CE Building, corner of 15th Street and Lacson, 034-7099906)

What started out as a little merienda place by the Bacolod Showroom has mushroomed into a serious eating destination with an honest to goodness tertulia beside it (Tertulia Uno). Don't miss out on their Pomni sandwiches (melange and bites and cheese are crowd favorites) that come in huge breads piled with homegrown lettuce salad. Delicate crowd favorites are their Asian Sliders, Mediterranean Chicken Salad and cream soup unsupervised all the way from Paris. The entrees serves great pleasure, burgers and a switch in mushrooms, walnuts and truffle oil.

Cities (Lourdes Center, 14th Street, 034-4333134)

The big problem when you get to Cities is what to order when you get there. You have an idea of what you want, but once you are there and faced with the amazing choices marked on mile-long display shelves, you're back in square one. Not a good place to labrats. But start with their Lemon Meringue Pie (my personal favorite) and move on to their Mud Pie, their Imported Chocolate Cake, their Triple Mousse and on to Lighter fare like their Fruity Cheesecakes. And then you can just improvise from there. Cities is the emporium of cakes, pies and sweets, and no matter what you order, you know you're in extremely magical hot-ing hands.

Chicken House: Hilda Branch (285 Sweet ave. Lacson, Mandalagan, 034-4349482)

I'm not going to waste adjectives on this one. Without ignoring their baby back ribs (which are to die for, this is where you find the best chicken inasal in the world. Ever. No contest. End of discussion.

City Lunch (Santa Ana Ave., Shopping Center, 034-4349117)

So numerous lunches (why else is it called City Lunch?) that are must-in your-every post. But be prepared to be surprised by their hushing, their super special slopes and their fresh lumpia, a local take home orders ready to a high approval of uncooked food procedures.

Felicity (Dell Building, 6th Street 034-4336588)

One of Bacolod's latest watering holes, serving up fabulous pastries, scrumptious casseroles and light lunches. The offerings range from pesky pastaccios to savory lasagna by Bash Day. But the place comes to its own with its chocolate cakes (Felicity's Chocolate Cake or Sinful Chocolate Bars Cake—hard to settle for one or the other), Blueberry Cheesecake and chewy concoctions.

Jenny's (2585 Street corner Lacson, 034-4348589)

Jenny's serves up an international menu with its distinctive Oasis Island-ic touch. People fly in from Manila on the early flight just to catch a Jenny's breakfast, and roll away by the opposite in sauce with a Negros sweet filling or the famous beef stew with its earthy flavors. I always line up for the Pad Thai, which is light, flavorful and generous beyond belief. And for merienda (or a full meal in itself) there's the Jenny's Hamburger complete with fried egg when and if you want it.

Super Siakberg House (Lacson Street, Kennedy Heights, beside General Mariano, 034-4358870)

This is the supreme of all chinboys for more than 30 years. It has every right to call itself Super. The place gets so packed, Bacolodnons actually share tables with strangers—not something that's done every day. Owner Jim Uy Enriquez boasts of the special bread they bake (unsweetened, unlike traditional batchoy buns) that goes well with the marrow-enriched broth, as well as bite figures-status.

Yroost (Lacson 19th Street corner Lacson, 034-3000958)

This is where Millie Elayco's group really play with traditional home-cooked recipes and flavors, and the results are mind-blowing. It serves traditional pancit molo, dinuguan and other Ilonggo delicacies. It also serves plain edible fruit, aside from eating in, customers order by the jar to bring to friends and family in Manila and other destinations. And then there's a pitcher version called the Inasal Wrap, which is chicken inasal wrapped in a secret lumpia wrapper brought to perfection with a sauce of plum sauce. Unique and delicious. You bring the whole experience to a close with a serving of ripe Indian papaya (papaya) topped with healthy dollops of good old Kraftar dulce gatas. And that, my friends, is Bacolod eating.

FELICIA'S display

SWEET Grand Inasal Wrap

BACOLOD Chicken House in Mandalagan

CALEN'S display featuring the Lemon Meringue Pie and Fruity Cheesecake (above) City Lunch Lumpia

'Dear Darla' is light and healthy pizza

By Jaymee T. Gamil

CRAVING FOR PIZZA BUT hesitant to ruin your hard-earned summer figure?

There's no need to choose between your stomach and your waistline. Yellow Cab has introduced the Dear Darla pizza, an innovative thin-crust pie rolled into a mini-wrap, topped with fresh garden vegetables instead of the usual chunks of meats.

The pizza, named after the puppy love between characters Darla and Alfalfa in the iconic "Little Rascals" movie, offers alfalfa sprouts and arugula leaves as main ingredients. They are served in a box along with a pizza cut into rectangular slices, sparsely topped with the default tomato sauce, cheese, olives, onions and pepperoni.

With extra-industrial sauce, Mediterran photo sounds and open kitchens giving a distinct character to all its restaurants, Yellow Cab offers an innovative fast-food dining experience. The point is different from other fast food joints, you're back in square one. Not a good place to labrats. But start with their Lemon Meringue Pie (my personal favorite) and move on to their Mud Pie, their Imported Chocolate Cake, their Triple Mousse and on to Lighter fare like their Fruity Cheesecakes. And then you can just improvise from there. Cities is the emporium of cakes, pies and sweets, and no matter what you order, you know you're in extremely magical hot-ing hands.

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Stax

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Colchin Bonbon

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Easy recipes for Mom's special day

FOR THOSE WHO DON'T have the time to plan for an elaborate party from for Mother's Day, Magnolia Chicken Station provides easy-to-prepare recipes that will surely reward any deserving mom.

Magnolia 7-Treasure Chicken

1 whole Magnolia Fresh Chicken, deboned (available at the Magnolia Chicken Station)
2 pcs Chinese sausages, sliced
½ tbsp dark Chinese bean sauce
4 pcs Shiitake mushrooms, soaked and sliced
1 tbsp dried shrimp
½ c pork strips
1 c c sweet chark
½ c chestnuts (if dried, soak for 30 mins.)
½ c bamboo strips
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp ginger
1 tsp scallions
2 tbsp peanut oil
5 makrut lemon leaves
2 c chicken stock
1/3 c oyster sauce
½ tsp black pepper
2 tbsp Shaoxing Wine
½ tsp sugar
½ c freshly brewed jasmine tea
½ cup rice

Procedure:

1. Marinate deboned Magnolia chicken in dark soy sauce, ginger, rice wine and five spice. Saute ginger, scallions and pandan in peanut oil. Add rice until cooked completely.
2. Add oyster sauce, soy sauce, sugar, pepper and salt. Slowly add stock little by little, then add tea. Stuff in Magnolia chicken.
3. Add all other ingredients and wrap in foil or leave loosen and steam for one hour, or roast for 45 minutes in foil only.

CHICKEN
and Anchovy Pasta

Magnolia Chicken and Anchovy Pasta

200 g Magnolia Chicken Station Breast
Fillets, cut into cubes
400 g cooked penne (al dente)
½ c olive oil (preferably Italian)
1 tbsp garlic, minced
1 pc medium onion, finely chopped
4 pcs anchovy fillets, chopped
½ c sun dried tomatoes, plumped in warm water
3 tbsp green olives, cut into wedges
3 tbsp pinenuts, toasted and cut into halves
1 c cream
2 tbsp Smirnoff vodka
3/4 tsp cumin
1/4 tsp cinnamon
pinch of nutmeg
1 tbsp basil, chopped
salt and pepper
½ c grated parmesan cheese (preferably Magnolia cheese)

Procedure:

1. Saute garlic and onion in olive oil.
2. Add Magnolia Fresh Chicken and anchovies. Add the rest of the ingredients, except basil, and simmer. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Toss pasta and basil with the sauce, then garnish with Parmesan cheese.

For more recipes, call the SMC Customer Care Hotline at 633-1201.

1 TABLESPOON
Chicken

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KOREAN COOKING I

Salt and pepper squid

By Norma Chikiamco
Contributor

WHENEVER WE ORDER SALT AND pepper squid in a Chinese restaurant, everyone digs in hungrily as soon as the platter is served on the table. The crisp coating, the slightly salty, mildly spicy flavor, and the tender texture of the squid, all continue to make this dish irresistible.

Here's my kitchen-tested succession of the dish. The use of egg whites (instead of whole eggs) makes the coating light and crunchy.

Salt and Pepper Squid

3-4 Servings
½ lb squid
Salt and pepper
2 egg whites
1 c flour
3 c cooking oil

D.I.Y.

Clean squid: Remove heads and innards. Squeeze off the black ink from the squid and discard ink (or reserve for another use). Peel off the purple skin from the squid.

Cut open each squid. Cut each squid into three [see photo above]. Wipe dry with paper towels.

With a sharp knife, score the inner surface of each squid with crisscross patterns [see photo above]. Season lightly with salt and pepper.

Beat egg whites until foamy. Spread the flour on a plate lined with waxed paper. Heat oil in a wok or skillet.

Dip each squid into egg whites then dredge lightly with flour. Fry in hot oil until a light golden yellow [see photo above]. Remove from wok or skillet and transfer to a platter lined with paper towels to ensure all gets absorbed.

When all the squid pieces have been fried, arrange on a serving platter and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Serve with desired sauce (chili sauce, vinegar dip, ketchup, etc.).

Cook's tips

- Do not overcook the squid as it doesn't get tough. It takes less than one minute to cook the squid through.
- Make sure the oil is very hot before cooking in the squid.
- Do not season the cooked squid (no brandy with salt and pepper. Despite its name, the dish doesn't have to be too salty or too peppery. Sometimes slightly fewer pinches of salt and pepper than you call for does wonders on the table for those who want additional seasoning.

Elbert's Cheesesteak Sandwiches at the Concourse, and Lululbelle and Cibo Bimbi at R3 are now open. Every new space is a new taste.

POWER PLANT MALL

Argentina Corned Beef Empanada

ONE OF THE BEST things about corned beef is, you can cook it any way you want, wherever—breakfast, lunch, dinner or even snacks.

For Mother's Day, here are two easy recipes for your family.

ARGENTINA Corned Beef Tanin-Anghang Meatballs

ARGENTINA Corned Beef Empanada

Argentina Corned Beef Empanada

Ingredients:

1 can (198g Argentina Corned Beef

2 cups/onions, diced and fried

¼ c tomato

½ tsp salt

1/8 tsp pepper

Dash

2 c all-purpose flour

1 tbsp sugar

2/3 c. mot garlic

½ c cold water

all-purpose flour for dusting

Cooking oil for frying

Prepare the filling by mixing Argentina Corned Beef, potatoes and onions. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

To prepare crust: Mix all ingredients in an electric mixer at low speed. When particles are fine, test in ½ cup cold water. Mix again until dough holds together and can be formed into a ball.

Divid flour crust into nine pieces. Place dough on top and sprinkle with flour. Place another sheet of wax paper on top. With small rolling stroke, roll out dough starting from the center toward the edges until dough is about ¼ inch thick. Cut 4-inch rounds using a cookie cutter. Fill rounds with 1 tbsp of corned beef filling. Fold over and flute edges to seal.

Deep-fry empanada pieces in hot oil until golden brown. Drain on paper towel.

Makes 12-16 pieces.

Argentina Corned Beef Tanin-Anghang Meatballs

Meatballs

1 can 175g Argentina Corned Beef

½ c breadcrumbs

2 tbsp all-purpose flour

1 tbsp onion, finely chopped

1 tbsp celery stalks, finely chopped

½ tsp salt

1/4 tsp ground black pepper

1 egg, lightly beaten

¼ c all-purpose flour

½ c cooking oil

Tanin-Anghang Sauce:

½ c pineapple juice

2 tbsp white vinegar

¼ c brown sugar

½ c Tanin-Anghang Sauce

Cooking:

1 tbsp cornstarch

¼ c water

2 tbsp cooking oil

¼ c red onion, cubed

½ c red and green bell pepper strips

Procedure

In a large bowl, mix Argentina Corned Beef, breadcrumbs, flour, chopped onion, chopped celery, salt, pepper and egg. Form into 1 tbsp balls then dredge in flour. Pan fry in hot oil until golden brown. Set aside.

In large cup, mix pineapple juice, vinegar, brown sugar, Tanin-Anghang Sauce. Set aside.

Heat 2 tbsp oil in saucepan. Quickly stir fry onions and bell peppers. Drain and set aside. In the same pan with the same oil, pour in pineapple juice mixture. Cook until sauce turns thick.

Add meatballs and stir to coat with sauce. Transfer to a serving platter then top with onions and bell pepper. Serve hot with steamed rice.

Makes 3-4 servings.

MANGO with Sticky Rice

GREEN Curry with Free Range Chicken

TOM Yum Seafood

Taste of Thailand —and the real thing

Phad Thai stakes an ever bigger and tastier claim to authenticity

By Yunjie Bugia-Reyes

FOUR MONTHS INTO operation and Thai Patio remains at the top of its game. And it's not really because of its classy, cozy interiors and the glass chairs that elegantly ranch the white motif or the framed pictures of Thai spices and herbs that offer a contemporary Asian feel.

It's simply the food—authentic, downright good and incredibly satisfying. What such lighter and healthier because Thais use a lot of herbs, including lemongrass, cancer bush, basil, galangal and kaffir lime.

"I think it's high time that we have a real Thai restaurant," Co said. "Manila, being a very cosmopolitan city, has a host of Chinese restaurants. We have a good number of retail stores but when it comes to Thai food we can't pinpoint any good one."

Well, with the opening of Thai Patio, one doesn't have to go all the way to Thailand to get a taste of the real thing. Co has been ecstatic to partner with A&P Global Co., the biggest food conglomerate in Thailand and the licensing company of Thai Patio in the Philippines.

Thai Patio first opened in Bangkok in 1999 by Kannika Rattra. It became famous for its simple home-cooked style and high-quality dishes, which led it to open branches in other parts of Thailand and in Taiwan. To date, Thai Patio has successfully created more and can be found in various parts of the world, including Singapore, Geneva, London, and the latest addition, Manila.

"Initially, I wanted our patrons to take a look at the Thai restaurants around Manila but they were not impressed. instead, they went to the different markets in Manila, like Farmer's and Balintawak, to see available ingredients. They don't really mind how many or what kind of Thai restaurants were here. They only wanted to make sure the ingredients are all fresh. For serious things that are real fresh, we import them."

Rich and flavorful

Thai food has fresh, exploding tastes. It is basically "chili heat," but at Thai Patio one can request that the food go easy on the fiery chili.

Among the salads, the lemongrass Beef Salad with Thai Eggplant, Traditional Thai Green Papaya Salad, Shrimp Salad and Glass Noodle Salad with Seafood.

Anyway dishes, such as Spicy Beef Salad and Grilled Portobello Mushrooms, Chicken Satay and Deep-Fried Marinated Tofu, will really whet your appetite.

Soups should not be passed up, especially if it is Tom Yum Hotpot or Seafood. The succulent of Tom Yum comes from three different sources—lime, tamarind and vinegar.

"Mixing different spices and flavors is a very tedious process. But it has a very amazing result to your palate," said Co.

Of course, Thai Patio's selection of meats, including Chicken or Seafood Coconut Soup with Galangal, Hot and Spicy Pork Boodle Clear Soup with Holy Basil, definitely builds up your craving for the ultimate Thai dining experience.

Thai Patio offers a good variety of curries. Check out Green Curry with Free Range Chicken, Red Prawn Curry with Pineapple, Red Roasted Duck Curry with Lychee and Seedless Grapes, Osso Bucco in Mild Yellow Curry with Potato and Okra, Red Lamb Curry with Peanut, Grilled Beef Sirloin sautéed in Green Curry with Thai Eggplant, and Crispy Pork Knuckle roasted in Red Curry Jungle Style.

Complementing these dishes are the native Thai beverages, such as the refreshing herbal Thai iced Tea and Thai "Singha" Beer. If you opt for fresh organic tea, try Kaffir Lime, Rosemary, Tarragon, Mint, Lemongrass or Ginger.

Hungry while Strolling in Greenhills? Thai Patio is the perfect oasis-cum-resto to a memorable Thai meal.

Thai Patio is at G/L, Greenhills 2, Ayala Center, Makati City.

THAI Patio owner Ruth Velasco Co

ASSORTED Fried Thai Spring Rolls (chicken, vegetables, prawns and crab)

Thai chefs (from left) Pranom Inajit, Marungsit Sunsan, Anocha Dhanajata and Chanthasinh Kemsak

PHAD Thai

Baking, pastry team off to Asian faceoff

JUDGES Mendoza, McEntire, James Rosales, Buddy Trindad, Ruel Vargas, Sonny Mariano, Charlene Ngo, Bernie Roger and Kim Marcel cross with Prize by Jobim, Raj Lingad, Jackie Fu, Pete Serrels, Pirek Cheng, Marsha Ebro, Carol Lucio and Alma Dal

THE 12TH ASIAN INTERNATional Food and Drink, Hotel, Restaurant and Foodservice Equipment, Supplies and Services Exhibition (Hotel 2009) will be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibit Center, May 6 to 9.

The highlight of this biennial event, organized by the Hong Kong Chefs Association (HKCA) and Reed Hong Kong Exhibition Services Ltd. (REED), is the Hong Kong International Culinary Classic 2009. This year, the competition is made up of seven main categories: Western Cuisine, Chinese Cuisine, Pastry Live, Bakery Competition, Live Fruit Competition, Ice Carving and Gourmet Team Challenge.

The Pastry Alliance of the Philippines is sending 20 of its members to compete in the bakery and pastry category: Malecio Arisso of Pavilion Hotel (Ice Sculpture); Martha Rivo of Global Academy and Buddy Trindad of Park Avenue Grooves (Pastry Table-Sweet Ingredient Live Pastry); Pirek Cheng of Pastry Biz and Carol Lucio of Center for Culinary Arts, Manila (Wedding Cake); Antonio Mendoza of Bellevue Hotel and Pirek Cheng (Showpiece); Kim Marcel of CCA (Plated Dessert); Ruel Vargas of CCA, Ria Lingad of Pavilion Coffee Corporation and Gourmet Spa of CCA (Hour Buffet); James Anindo of Institute of Culinary Art and Rendezvous; Blake Sevilla of Magsaysay Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts; Peachy Abbas of Mont Grand, College of St. Benilde; and Michel Pi of Prime Pacific University Alliance (Management Support Team).

Established in November 2005, the Pastry Alliance of the Philippines aims to be the premier source of pastry baking and technical information for the culinary industry in the Philippines. Its members consist of chefs, culinary instructors, suppliers, distributors, students and retired industry professionals.

Those who are interested to join PAP can visit www.pastryalliancePhilippines.com or inquire.

POMELO Shrimp Salad

4th Street Kitchen combines the traditional and the modern

CHICKEN pandan with mango chutney

Home-tested specialties

By Jose Wendell Capili
Contributor

MICHELE PANTO-ja tells me she had no plans of going into the food business at all. She had studied marketing and was doing public relations, events planning and marketing for a large group of companies in the retail industry.

But when her mother suddenly passed away two years ago, she didn't give it a second thought. It seemed only natural that she should pick up where her mother had left off.

So Marvel Kitchen continues to provide home-cooked cooking to us devoted clients.

Michele's mom, Tita Minie (the late Marie Vita Pantoja), dipped into the business almost effortlessly. She had been in the garments business and had dabbled in real estate, but cooking had always been something she enjoyed.

When she decided to establish Ink Grove Kitchen, she was actually picking up from where her mother-in-law, Erlee Lorena Panoja, had left off.

Erlee was a pioneer, one of the country's first women journalists in the '30s and '40s, and she had passed on to her daughter-in-law the same passion for the profession. But when they got married and she realized that they knew nothing about keeping house, she decided to set up an international type of school that would help other young women like them.

Thus was Home and Hearth born in the early '70s, in the same sprawling New Manila bungalow which now houses the Marvel Kitchen. Heart and Hearth's was originally just "a four-week workshop for brides and brides-to-be," a crash course in the rudiments of cooking (including menu planning, going to market and preparing basic dishes), sewing, making a household budget, infant care, basic home decorating, etc. Eventually it expanded to include several specialty courses, entertaining, food grooming, even weaving and jewelry making, and other hobbies.

Family recipes

When Marie set up her catering business, she realized that even as she was applying what she had learned in culinary school, when planning her menus, she was reaching back to the traditional dishes that her mother-in-law had been serving, using recipes which had been in the family for generations.

Michele says that today, when she sits down at her mother's desk to fill clients' orders, collection slips in traditional Inez Palanca cut-outs and pastel colors (sans, by the way, Hermes and Inez-Inez) at stake in your child which was what 4th Street Kitchen has come to be best known for: Chinoiserie pomelo and shrimp salad and Thai chicken pandan with mango chutney—the fruity flavor and hot kick lowering over her shoulder and swirling of her.

Michele's personal style—which is pretty limited in the very chic ranks the Fashionista—is styled in the best-paved urban lifestyle and the modernizing western young men and women. But she is also continuing a long-established tradition. She does both full catering and food orders.

My own preference is for the Asian Fusion menu, but I'm exploring the Continental, Philippine and Mediterranean as well.

Check out 4th Street Kitchen at http://4thstreetkitchen.2906.multiply.com and on Facebook.

MICHELE Pantoja

The Ultimate Breakfast Companion: McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee

McDonald's serves the perfect companion for every Goddess Breakfast favorite. McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee. McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee gives that extra boost needed for the long day ahead.

Here are some fun facts about the perfect brew that will surely perk up your mornings.

Every morning one of McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee is made from 100% pure Arabica coffee beans. Arabica coffee beans are famous throughout the world for their superior quality, producing only the most luscious combination of flavor and aroma every coffee drinker is sure to enjoy. McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee perfectly goes with McDonald's wide Goddess breakfast offerings. There is the new favorite McDonald's Hamdesal and the classics – Sausage McMuffin, Sausage McMuffin with Egg, and Egg McMuffin. But more importantly quality coffee does not have to be expensive. McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee is so easy on the pocket and is priced to be enjoyed, only Php 30.00 for 8oz. and Php 47.00 for 12oz.

McDonald's serves the most important meal of the day with nothing less the highest quality ingredients at affordable prices – and that's a fact.

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New fun, affordable desserts

OREO Hot Fudge and Oreo Hot Caramel Sundae and Monster Float

MCDONALD'S HAS LINED UP DELECTABLE dessert treats to beat the summer heat. Creamy, soft-serve ice cream topped with a generous servings of hot fudge and hot caramel have always been customer favorites and have become a McDonald's trademark throughout the years.

The Float, on the other hand, quickly gained popularity among customers with its cool and refreshing mix of Coke, soft-serve ice cream and hot fudge. Poised to be reprised, the Hot Fudge and Hot Caramel Sundae and Hi-C Orange Float are priced at P25-each.

This 2009, McDonald's is adding more variety and fun to its dessert lineup. With the release of "Monsters vs Aliens," the first computer animated movie produced by real 3-D from DreamWorks Animation, McDonald's is offering the new Oreo Hot Fudge and Oreo Hot Caramel Sundae for only P30. There's also the Monster Float, everybody's favorite Float, only bigger at 22-oz. for P35.

McDonald's desserts are sure items only the freshest dairy ingredients. Partnered with top brands and trusted suppliers to deliver the best to every customer, quality need not be expensive at McDonald's.

HOT FUDGE and Hot Caramel Sundae

McDonald's, the leader in fast food innovation, is the world's number one quick service restaurant, serving only quality food at affordable prices.

KING Crab Sotanghon in a Pot

King Crab House is San Juan's best-kept secret

THERE'S NOTHING MUCH to see in this 11-year-old Chinese restaurant in San Juan. If you're expecting to gawk at huge tanks of fish housed in a room bursting with bright lights to match the blood-red tablecloth topped with a plate of pomano or *lenguado*, you'll be disappointed. There is none of that here.

BAGOONG Chicken

You go to King Crab House not for its interior, which is simple and comfy, but for the food, which has satisfied clients from all over for many years now.

There's the sweet, fun and refreshing flesh of crabs flown in daily from Zamboanga. Recolored and Tagle. Most diehards say to enjoy crabs at their best, they should be fresh and alive right up to cooking. About 30-40 live crabs are supplied to the restaurant every day. Most of the time, they are sold out by evening, especially on weekends.

Cooked in a variety of ways—steamed, baked, in coconut milk, curry, olive oil and ginger cuisine, or prepared with scrumptious recipe in a pot, or simply to salt and pepper—every dish King Crab House serves is a gustatory delight.

KING Crab House owner Julie Te

The restaurant's standout signature uses the kitchen keeps live shrimps (*suahe*) from Batangas, lapu-lapu from Mindoro and king fish from Laguna in Pete.

King Crab House: 1723-8820 in 231 San Juan's best-kept secret. Owner Julie Te makes sure the menu is changed regularly to tickle diners' palates. Its latest addition includes Pakbet Fried Rice, prepared like a viand with minced veggies like asparagus and carrots with black mushroom and fish sauce/bagoong.

The Thousand Layer Pork is a sweet pork cooks with broccoli, and it comes with cassava bread. The more flavorful Bagoong Chicken is a crispy, crunchy treat.

"We constantly develop our menu because our clients, mostly politicians and people in show business, always look for something new, although their will orders the favorites," says Te, who also operates other King Crab branches in Benguet, QC, and on Scout Rallos, Parañaque.

Old favorites that continue to pack crab eaters into the restaurant include the Crab in 4-1 Sauce, Shrimp Pic Cake, Toast Crab Rapid, King Crab Soup, Steamed King Fish with Soy Sauce, Drying Chicken, Pancake and Mapo Bean curd.

Typical of a Chinese restaurant, King Crab House also serves Soup Jogo prepared either braised or fried with spicy chili.

It also serves and delivers within Quezon City. Mengki Brigo-Reyes

King Crab House is at 227 F Guevarra St. cor. Wilson St., San Juan.

THOUSAND Layer Pork and Broccoli with Cassava

IN THIS ISSUE
Crystal salt lamp and other new faves /C1

LIFESTYLE Food

Ming Tsai raves about Philippine 'golf food'—crispy 'bangus'

Celebrity chef believes 'fusion is confusion' and that simple food is hardest to cook

"EAST Meets West" star Ming Tsai

By Nanyo Dugo-Reyes

HES THE CELEBRITY chef-chefs would love to cater.

So when chef Ming Tsai of the famed "East Meets West" and "Simply Ming" TV shows set foot on Philippine soil last Friday, local chefs left gathered—and got very excited. Lunches, dinners, autograph signing, interviews and culinary demos were organized for him to get a taste of what he ought to know about the country during his six-day stay.

"I have to be honest—I didn't know a lot about Filipino cuisine," he admitted. "Though I have a couple of Filipino friends back home and have tried chicken adobo, lumpia and chicken tinlang. But you see, being in Asia, I know you really have good food. Everyone in Asia has terrific food."

Ming enjoyed almost every single dish served him by Philippine chefs, celebrities themselves—from chef Jun del Rosario's Kapampangan-spiced pork sisig, kaldereta, sinuaya and sibol salad at Ed Café, to the fusion-West interpretation of Pinoy food of Glenda Barretto, Myrna Segismundo and Jill Sandejas at Rita Mangal-La, Jessie Sincioco's chicken pork adobo and alugbot salad with kesong puti, and J Cambon's delightful, crispy lapu-lapu with sweet chili sauce, spring rolls and fish cake at Aruma.

"They were all delicious, I must say," said Ming, who was here in Manila by Bayanihan in celebration of its 50th anniversary with Subaru and MAP. "They were prepared very nice and clean. You took classic Filipino dishes and turned it to the next level. And the best dish for me every time has been the pork, especially the pork crispy skin."

In his press conference at The Rockwell Club, other chefs like Margarita Fores, Bradley Trinidad and Heidi Ching caught a glimpse of Ming in cool print-all grey long-sleeved polo, denim and sneakers, with no socks.

"My cousin also lives here and he said, 'Look, great golf, great beaches, great people! Dad's ashes you'll see in the Philippines,'" said Ming, who instantly got excited about the visit.

He managed to squeeze into his hectic schedule a round of golf at Southwoods and Sherwood Hills. He also enjoyed the clubhouse food.

"I've seen a lot of golf courses and you have great courses here. I love golf and more importantly, the food. The chef at Southwoods made an outdoor grill of squid, pompano and pork belly. We ate crispy bangus for lunch and I kept saying 'This is the best thing I've had. It's so good.' And, this a golf food! In the States, if you say golf food you get hamburgers and hotdogs. Here, you're getting fresh fish."

Passion for food

Back in California but raring to leave, Ohio, Ming is best known for his shows "East Meets West" and "Ming's Quest," which both have been shown locally. Aside from winning an Emmy for "Ming's Quest," the Asian-American chef was the distinction of beating "Iron Chef" Bobby Flay in the "Battle Duck" episode. He has also served as judge to "Cooking Under Fire," and guested in an episode of "Top Chef."

A Mechanical Engineering

GARFIELD

A. LIPIN

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ATOMO AND WEBOY

BIKO MACHINE

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DIANE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

				1			3	
7		9	5	4				
							8	
				1		9	4	
6	9			5			7	1
	5		6		8			
	2							
				8	1	6		7
	3			9				

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	5	4	9	1	6	3	7	2
7	3	6	4	2	5	8	9	1
2	9	1	7	3	8	5	6	4
9	6	3	5	8	4	2	1	7
1	7	2	6	5	3	9	4	8
5	4	8	1	7	9	2	3	6
6	2	7	3	9	1	4	8	5
3	8	9	2	6	4	7	1	5
4	1	5	8	7	6	5	2	3

'Pancit puti'

MORE AND MORE ARE joining the ranks of "real-luto"—the growing breed of people, from working moms to foodies, who make smart, practical choices in cooking.

Making a bid for this market is Knorr Real Sarap seasoning with real herbs and spices that can be used to any dish, from fried dishes to saucy stews, even on veggies and rice.

Try this recipe of classic pancit puti...Asian noodles with sizzling-like but safe touch, topped with garlic bits. No soup, no sauce, Thus the name "puti." Be creative and top off with tinapa flakes and spring onions for a dash of color. It makes perfect merienda.

Knorr Real Sarap Pancit Puti

1 tbsp cooking, minced
1 tbsp garlic, minced
2 tbsp cooking oil
300 g ground pork
2 c water
1 ½ sachets Knorr Real Sarap 7g
300 g bihon
150 g tinapa, flaked
3 tbsp kinchay, chopped
3 tbsp spring onion, chopped

Heat oil in pan and sauté garlic and onion. Add ground pork and sauté/cook until cooked through. Transfer to serving plate and top with flaked tinapa, kinchay and spring onion.

Junior cooking classes for summer

WANT KETCHUP IS OFFERING COOKING classes for young people. Schedules: Junior Culinary Workshop, May 5-8 (T-F) 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m., for kids age 8-12 who would like to learn the basics of cooking and baking. Course includes Table Set-up and Serving Skills, including Napkin Folding Arts, Do's and Don'ts of Table Etiquette, Party Manners, Tool and Filling Breakfast combo, baked and non-baked snacks, No-Puto Cooking Recipes (from soup to dessert)... Simple Baking and Decorating (creative cookies, muffins and cupcakes), Young Peoples Cook-a-Way 10-15 (T-F), 9 a.m.-2 p.m., for those age 13 and up who would like to upgrade their skills and move on to more sophisticated recipes. Coverage includes Healthy Snacks (Sandwiches, Salads, Fruits with Smoothies and Shakes), To-go-meals (pack an Pasta Choices and Rice Toppings), Quick and Easy Party Foods for entertaining (includes Pica-Pica, Punch with Simple Fried Toppings, Bake Sale, Goodies (Scrobies cooking and packaging ideas). Visit www.thenaya-kitchen.com or visit the Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts Center, Taguig (Saturday, at 2330 Liberty Bldg., A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 8921021 local 109 or e-mail contactus@thenayakitchen.com.

KIDS learning how to bake

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Dining places at A. Venue

A. Venue Lifestyle Hub on Makati Avenue has artsy dining places like Arbra Gallery Café where concept of "art as food of the soul" continues to chain diners and art lovers. Flakes offers authentic "cuisine from home" while Gerbod Café offers German comfort food. A. Venue is at 1929 Makati Ave., Makati City.

Special promo from print shop

Digiprint, a print and deliver photo retail shop, offers a special promotion. Go to the newly opened Digiprint branches at SM Manila and SM Fairview and get 20 prints free when you have your photos developed. Printing: 100 pieces in 5R glossy or additional 30 pieces free prints of the same size while printing 150 pieces in 4R gives you additional 30-R8 pieces free. The promo is valid for single receipt transaction in cash or credit card. All prints are delivered free anywhere in the country.

Pacquiao fight at Hyatt Casino

The fight between Manny "The Pacman" Pacquiao and Ring Magazine Light Welterweight champion Nonito "The Knockout" Donaire will be broadcast live from the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the Ballroom of Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila on May 2, 2 a.m. Watch it on a large projector screen while enjoying appetizing snacks, as well as free-flowing soft drinks and beer/beer. Get 10-percent discount if you dine in any of the hotel's restaurants and bars on the same day. Two lucky guests may fight-up closely with your family and friends at the Music Pods of the newly opened Hyatt Music Bar. Call 2937234.

Mother's Day offering

Get a chance to win a breakfast-in-bed treat for two persons aboard MS 7, 101 Islands in the Lucky Star cooked at Heritage Hotel. The promo is for diners of the lunch/dinner buffet spread at Riviera Café on Mother's Day.

Prizes include discount and gift vouchers from Boracay Cruise, Seven for All Mankind jeans, Accessorize, Shoppers Paradise and spa. Just for the Guide, David's Salon, and giveaways from Cafés pasta and other specimens.

Buffet features French, Italian, Mediterranean, Malay, Singaporean, Filipino and Japanese cuisines. Ninya Singaporean dishes are featured in the central buffet. This richly layered cuisine is a blend of Chinese ingredients and station pre-slow-cooking techniques, interplaying with Malay herbs and spices. Must-tries are Satay, Hainanese Chicken Rice and Laksa.

Also offered in Heritage Hotel is the Tagaytay Haven with Buffet Breakfast package for two, complete with free use of swimming pool, gym, sauna and Jacuzzi, and free shuttle service to SM Mall of Asia. Call 8548888 or e-mail hoobbm@heritagehotelmanila.com.

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PROMO MECHANICS:

Ming Tsai asks, 'But when's the chicken adobo coming?'

Celebrity chef enjoys a 'degustacion' served by Filipino chefs

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

Chef Ming Tsai with the Filipino food festival chefs Glenda Barretto, Jill Sandiego and Myrna Segismundo, and Blue Ginger Lia's Richard Alarcon and Tess Tirona, promotions manager and director of sales and marketing, respectively

WHILE TSAI APPEARED A LOT of amenities at the Eden Shangri-La Hotel. But of course! After all, he has a hit TV program and best-selling books (inspire in local bookstores have run out last time I checked). He gladly posed for pictures with chefs and diners. He also ate and dined with a few of us. (The dinner had been arranged by his cousin, Leighton Tsai, who resides and works here.)

During the dinner, it was pointed out that there was a Filipino food festival at the hotel's Heritage Wing lobby. It had been planned and executed by Glenda Barretto, Myrna Segismundo and Jill Sandiego.

The three chefs decided to do a degustacion menu, especially for the Blue Ginger chef that he did check out the festival and the dishes featured that day, such as Bicol empanada, fresh lumpiang ubod, ampalaya salad and pork barbecue. As he tasted the empanada, we talked about the many kinds of vinegar in the country, and he found sugarcane vinegar an interesting variety.

While tasting Myrna's adobo plate, we talked about another kind of love being banned by city ordinance in Chicago, the Windy City. He said that what you eat shouldn't be regulated. He cited the Chicago chef who continued to serve it in his restaurant, including the $10 foie in the pizza for people who wanted it on order. The ban was repealed last year.

When asked what he had eaten since he arrived, he said he had a great milkfish in a gulf club restaurant (he's an avid golf player), the fish fried to stuff that the skin was crispy. He took time to mourn he had dating to hungry. Then he mentioned crudeness and I knew that he had that at M Café the night before, the crudeness cooked by chef Sau del Rosario.

A plate of appetizers came, kinchoy of sayote tops, calamansi shrimp and lechon on a crispy boodstee or upon pastry cube. It was explained to the chef that only the baby tofu was included because he might not like to have the cadaver chick.

Trio of soups

Then the trio of soups arrived: cracking mussel, mongo soup and crispata na bangus or milco. While he listened to the many kinds of sinoling against the sinigang, what really interested him was the dinalang sauteed, is translated by Glenda Barretto that made the lunch caramel like with the addition of egg. He said it was the closest he said it was like chocolate inside, the Japanese egg custard dish, and then presented to photograph it and to ask for the recipe.

Dissolving patis or fish-based fish salad was served with tahini duck egg and a mustgarette flavored with lingering Balayan. When the chef commented on how we like rice in the country, I wondered why, until I saw the M Café menu in which the salad is also served.

The chef also praised the pinaa na sarsyha. The pinaa is my favorite, vacabond that is picked and cooked with coconut milk, stuffed back into the carapaces, wrapped in banana leaves and then steamed. Because the carabo was used, a victory mostly found in the southern part of the country, there was a sense of shell dividers within the roast, so that tiny shreds of shell entered the enjoyment of the pinaa. The chef said it was okay, then thanked his share of it.

The main course was roasted boneless suckling pig accompanied by the ampalaya salad. We talked about how the liver sauce is used to the south, and we beat up for the suckling pig.

Kaong pan was next, the white cheese grilled with mascovado sugar and almonds. It seemed to be a favorite of the chef, who said his goodbyes. Tsai had he didn't get to taste the imbakan beverage. Those of us who stayed behind took in the thick cinnamon drink with tapa/tapsilog.

Ming Tsai would get to taste more of Filipino cooking during his stay, but during the dinner, he asked where the chicken adobo would be coming. Glenda Barretto looked at me as if to say: "We should have served him that?" I'm not to send him some.

Email: pinoyfood88@yahoo.com

Ming Tsai raves about Philippine 'golf food'—crispy 'bangus'

From page F1

graduate of Yale University, Ming pursued his true passion and apprenticed in various European establishments, and later obtained a master's degree in Hotel Administration and Hospitality Marketing at Cornell University. He counts among his influences Jean Haas, whom he considers his mentor and the father of East-West cuisine; Hiroto Hiromo at Nacchan (for yakitori); Gerald Boyer and Joel Robuchon; Rawlins nabi roaster Kobayashi of Osaka; and culinary dreams Julia Child, who he says "taught me it was okay to be authentic and poke fun at yourself on screen."

Flickr stalks Sally, Ming opened the Blue Ginger restaurant in Wellesley, Massachusetts, now 11 years old, where he has developed a loyal following for his East and West cuisine. Or in Tsai's own Blue Ginger received raves from the Boston Globe, who named "Best New Restaurant" by Boston Magazine, and was nominated by the James Beard Foundation as "Best New Restaurant 1998." Esquire Magazine honored Ming as "Chef of the Year 1998."

TSAI HONORS and produces his own cooking show, "Simply Ming," soon to be shown in the Philippines.

Ming is the host and executive producer of the public TV cooking show, "Simply Ming," now on its seventh season. He is also the author of three best-selling cookbooks: "Blue Ginger: East Meets West Cooking with Ming Tsai," "Simply Ming" and "Ming Tsai's Master Recipes."

Ming is also a product developer. For the past decade, Ming has used Rosenthal advanced ceramic cutting tools, like Blue Ginger line of East-West tools' selection, launched at Target stores in 2006). It is continued to expand.

He also co-designs an eco-friendly line of bamboo cutting boards and serveware. He is also featured in the Sub-Zero/Wolf website as one of the "Friends of the Kitchen" personalities.

East and West cuisine

Ming has never enjoyed the word "fusion" to his culinary creations. "Fusion is confusion," he said. But his East and West combination of cooking techniques has always worked to his advantage.

"It's simply the blending of Eastern and Western techniques and ingredients that produces food that's bold and flavorful. I love marinating textures and temperatures like serving toast on cold gazpacho or salad on a hot dip. I like smooth and crunchy. At the end of the day, my food is inherently healthy. I'm not a diet chef. I don't care about calories but because of Asian techniques of braising and steaming and flash-frying, the food comes healthy yet delicious."

As an Asian food advocate, does he really think Philippines has what it takes to be known internationally?

"It's strange when you go to the places you have every Asian store but Filipino. Maybe one or two. It's always Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Vietnamese. I'm just speculating but I don't think Filipino chefs leave your country to try to make it to the States. Most Japanese and Chinese owners and cooks a."

He added: "But with your style of food, with all the uses of vinegars, soy sauce and pork, you can absolutely do well. Just like a Singaporean restaurant in New York City that's doing well now. Your food profile is delicious. You use a lot of meat like pork and chicken. But I've had dinner fish here, too, thus anything else, like shrimp, listed once. Yours is a nonstereotypical of Chinese and Spanish influences. Yes, have the best of both worlds."

Ming stressed that food is constantly evolving whether we like it or not. People are shifting to simpler, lighter food.

"In the States, people are staying away from big, heavy food. They want lighter food. More veggies. As the world is changing, the best food is always simple. The hardest food to cook is the simple food. You have 10 ingredients and you can make dishes taste really good. But if you have only four ingredients, which is harder to taste, you can also still make food taste equally good and clean."

Clean in look and taste

"Clean" has always been Ming's favorite word to describe food.

"Food has to be clean—in look and taste. There also has to be a contrasting taste. For guys do it here with miso mild in your vinegars. I love the balance of sour and sweet, spicy with sweet. I love soy sauce, fish sauce and salt, and balance it with sugar or fruit. Because every bite should be balanced."

Whether the approach to food is traditional, contemporary or gourmet, Ming would always go back to his favorite comfort food: ramen and meatballs.

"I love any type of noodle soup. When I was a kid I'd eat ramen noodles all the time. Salted ham sandwiches. Any thing between two pieces of bread. I can put a whole chicken in between breads. Hamburgers are okay. At Sherwood Hill, they did a great club sandwich with scrambled egg and bacon. It was delicious."

So far his greatest high as a chef is seeing his Blue Ginger customers enjoy his food.

"This is why I'm a chef, and does some chefs would like that is. Because you can actually change people's live for those two hours they're in your restaurant. You can take them away into escapism. You walk into my door, we grab you by your hand, we serve you great food, great wine, great service and ambiance, and you don't forget about, especially, this economy. You can forget about everything else in the world and just enjoy yourself," said Ming.

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Editor Brenda Q. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

DI for new pet project, Cesar Montano wants to cast Julia Hollywood actors

Cesar Montano hot on going global

By Marinel R. Cruz

CESAR MONTANO, AWARD-WINNING ACTOR-director and TV host recently went to the United States for a series of meetings with casting directors. "I'm doing a follow-up on several projects that I'm trying," Cesar told the barons in a recent media gathering.

"There's one film that I really hope to be part of," he added. "But I'm not allowed to talk about it yet. All I can say is that like 'The Great Raid,' it will be shot in Australia."

"The Great Raid" was a 2005 Hollywood film based on real events during World War II. Cesar played Capt. Juan Pajota, a Filipino guerrilla who took part in the January 1945 liberation of POW camp in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija. It was directed by John Dahl and featured foreign actors Benjamin Bratt, Joseph Fiennes, James Franco and Connie Nielsen.

As a director and producer, Cesar said he hopes to entice the global film market with a new yet project, "Takayo: The Quick Brown Fox." Part of his grand plan is to cast A-list Hollywood actors. "Somebody like Tom Cruise or

(STARS 10)

Coming back to LA

LOS ANGELES—ROB AND I ARdrool have a few days ago. Needless to say, we're still a bit jet-lagged. Our body clocks still haven't quite adjusted to the time difference (despite our taking melatonin to help with the change). But that sure hasn't stopped us from living fully!

BACK STORY

Love Sadvegar

Upon arrival at our hotel's front, we went out for a late Italian dinner, followed by Pinkberry frozen yogurt. Just not enough and not sweet, the past couple of days have been filled with fun, food and pomegranate. There are numerous toppings you can put (blueberries, chocolate chips, fresh fruit, granola, chocolate, and many more). It was a most refreshing and wonderful treat!

Upright Cabaret

Sunday night, I was scheduled to appear as a guest performer at the Upright Cabaret in Mark's Restaurant in Silver Mall, Ermita (www.uprightcabaret.com). The main performer was Tim Dowd, and my appearance was to help promote my upcoming shows in the West Coast. The musical director was Michael Grimol of "American Idol." Goody, goody, yum.

The crowd (oh my with jazz standards, and there my set followed. I sang "Promise Me," "I'd Give My Life for You," "Reflection" and did "Sh-Boom" as an encore. I then called Tim back onstage, and we sang "A Whole New World" together.

(SEE BACK)

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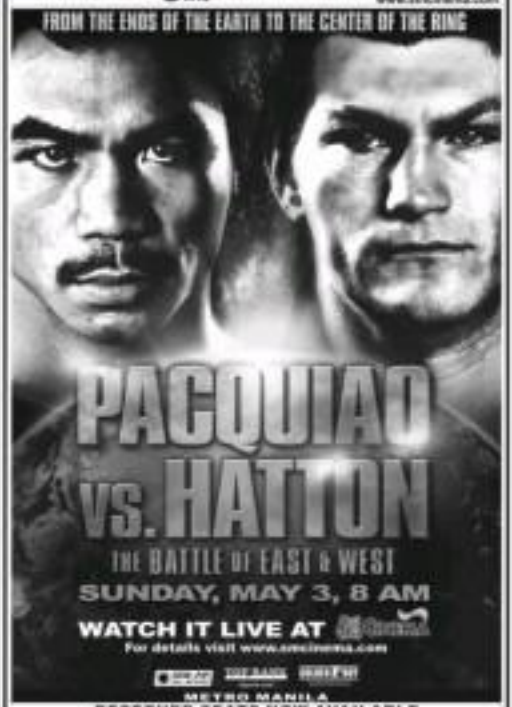

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Monsters rule in animated feature

WHEN WE HEARD THAT DreamWorks was producing an animated feature, "Monsters vs. Aliens," we made a mental note to watch it the minute it opened in town, because we felt that the film production company's unique sense of cinematic whimsy would serve that particular movie project well.

But when we actually started viewing the finished film last week, we felt a bit adrift, because the movie began in rewinding with a series of relatively banal images depicting an engaged couple's boring life in a small town in California.

Only later did we realize that the movie's humdrum start was intentional. It provided banal contrast to the wondrous, dazzling and amazing events that befell the engaged couple after the lightning bolt got zapped by an energy-filled probe from outer space.

The super energy transformed the young bride into a powerful, 50-foot, all-powerful giant named Gyrometra. Reportedly her transformation terrified her relatives and neighbors — not to mention her future, whose male ego was permanently damaged by the revelation that he had suddenly been reduced in the size of her hand.

The plot thickens when the U.S. military swoops down on the newly minted giant and transports her in a top-secret holding facility that the government has put up for "monsters" like her.

Didn't we first, Gyrometra is shocked when she's described as a monster. At times, however, she accepts the fact that, in the world's relatively pint-sized humans, she is a monster, like other fabled giants of old like King Kong.

Additional shocks are in store for Gyrometra when she meets the robot "monstrosity" creature in the army's special prison. They include a scientist who's accidentally caused himself into a human cockroach; a gelatinous blob; a sexed mermaid; and a really huge insect.

For decades now, these monsters have simply been put away to avoid scaring the world's billions of "normal" people to death. But when an alien civilization invades planet Earth, Gyrometra and her newfound colleagues turn out to be the unlikely saviors of the human race.

It's when the alien monsters are introduced and depicted that DreamWorks Animation's frankly wondrous, imaginative best truly kicks in, and makes "Monsters vs. Aliens" a uniquely delightful viewing treat.

Trouble is, after the alien/monstrous spaceship lands on planet Earth, the movie's plotting threatens to outdo even the usual series of further bizarre encounters and earthlings that have been done to death on the big screen over

FINDERS G4

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Coming back to LA

From page G1

Thanks to Orit Isaacson and Shane Eckard for the invitation to sing at Upright.

Visionary Awards

The following night, I was one of the guest performers at Visit Mitzi Hayoun' Visionary Awards, held at the Universal Hilton. The event recognizes trailblazers in the entertainment community from the worlds of film, television, theater and dance. The evening would also serve as a fundraiser for East West Players.

This year, among the honorees were John Cho (actor—"American Pie," the "Harold and Kumar" series, and the new "Star Trek" movie), Jessica Yu (Oscar-winning director for the documentary "Breathing Lessons") and Quoc Cuong Can (all-Asian dance group named the best dance crew in the United States).

It was a star-studded night! The awards night was hosted by Tamlyn Tomita ("The Karate Kid II," "The Joy Luck Club") and Francois Chau ("Lost"). George Takei (the original Sulu) and his partner Brad Altman were seated at our table. Carrie Ann Inaba (one of the judges on "Dancing with the Stars") was a presenter.

Opening the show was the Tinos Filipino Tinoys (one of whom is Luis Villareal, a name recognized by Manila Bulletin fans as Aaliw in Trese). "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe," as well as its composer). Other performers were Yuko Fujiyu, Hiroo Le Phong (a "Miss Saigon" alum heading to London to play Lun Tha in "The King and I") and Quest Crew (which closed the show. The audience was on its feet! Boy, Asians can totally dance!

It was an inspiring evening, celebrating the triumphs of the Asian-American theater community. It's all so wonderful to feel welcomed back.

Schedule

So, where are my shows going to be?

May 1, USQ Lai Yuguo; May 4, Sweetwater Casino, Washington; May 24, Silver Legacy Casino, Reno; and May 30, Asians Theatre, Los Angeles.

I hope to see you there.

Monsters...

From page G1

since the early days of sci-fi cinema.

In DreamWorks' enormous multi, however, these fears are soon laid to rest, as the movie's animators do their best to rise above lame jerk facial concepts. The big difference in the uniquely personal element contributed by the film's monsters themselves, who turn out to be delightfully varied. The most appealing of the lot is the blob, who has no mind, no heart—but a lot of personality, and a childlike sense of wonder. In the monsters team's resident kid, he (it?) adds heaps of juvenile humor to the ongoing battle's otherwise grim proceedings.

New persons

The other monsters also have good things going for them, but eventually will take center stage, as she should, being the lead character. She's inside interesting and vital because for most of the movie, she struggles against her super size and powers, believing that they prevent her from living an ordinary, happy life. Later, however, she comes to terms with her new Gigantonia persona, and even learns to delight in it.

The movie's resident nemesis is its main alien villain, a two-eyed super-octopus from outer space, who isn't really as ridiculously devious and scary as he should be.

But this film is clearly on the side of the good guys, so we learn to appreciate the mismatched cues of affairs in due time. Monsters rule!

'83 Cops'

Every Thursday at 11 p.m., Animal Planet will telecast "83 Cops," a unique cops-and-criminals show in which the policemen's canine "partners" lend a helping paw in tracking down culprits.

The show focuses on the exploits of the legendary 83 Patrol Police Department (83 Cops), which is on patrol 24/7 as the frontline in the war against urban crime. Replays on Sundays at 8 p.m.

'The Soloist' hits notes that clang

LOS ANGELES—DISPIRITED, DELUSIONAL and mad, the story of Nathaniel Ayers—a schizophrenic but wildly talented Juilliard-trained cellist living on the streets of downtown L.A.—captivated Los Angeles Times readers in 2005.

The fact that columnist Steve Lopez didn't just ignore him like most people would—that he not only spoke to Ayers but befriended and wrote movingly about him—added to the unexpected humanity of the tale.

"The Soloist" takes all those insanely engaging details and turns them into what is essentially a made-for-cable TV movie, albeit one populated by Oscar winners and nominees.

Robert Downey Jr. stars as Lopez, with Jamie Foxx playing opposite him as Ayers. Wunderkind filmmaker Wright ("Pride & Prejudice," "Atonement") is the director, working from a script by Susannah Grant ("Pain Brotherhood").

Awkward mix

On paper, you can see how this project had major promise. In execution, it's an awkward mix of gossip-ridden and mawkish sentiments in which even actors the caliber of Downey, Foxx and Catherine Keener seem to have had difficulty finding nuance.

Sure, Downey displays his usual quick-witedness, and a range that allows him to

ACHIEVE! Downey Jr. (left) and Jamie Foxx in "The Soloist"

be light on his feet, yet also show some real vulnerability. Where "The Soloist" is almost hyper committing actual emotions, posting his response to work to demonstrations who Ayers is and how his end up homeless despite his powerful, it's a compelling mystery. (Keener co-stars as a fictional character, Lopez's editor and ex-wife, who still struggles to keep him in line.)

But Wright is just off-putting; he's hamstrung no one experience, seems spent the whole time. Downey offers scenes framed—like he can't wait to get away from him—a session with which the audience will surely be able to sympathize. And the combination of streams of consciousness narration, flashbacks and plotline he presents as the manifestations of Ayers' mental illness instead come off like a "Rain Man" reduction. Hopefully, don't rest what Foxx, a highly skilled actor and Oscar-winner for "Ray," had in mind.

Tension

Nevertheless, a narrative friendship forms between these two vastly different men, one that requires Lopez to follow Ayers through some of the most squalid, dangerous parts of downtown. Wright finds some tension in these scenes; there's an unpredictability factor to how the homeless will react to Lopez. He also manages to tease the displaced and the mentally ill with some decency, but no many other moments feel like a gratuitous parade of roadblocks. (Wright used hundreds of real-life homeless people as background extras.)

In return, Lopez takes Ayers to the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall to reconnect with the music he loves most—Beethoven—with performances by the L.A. Philharmonic, led by then conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen. Again, it's a moment that should have had some inherent grace, but Wright bombards it with lights and voices to depict the experience feeling Ayers is enjoying. Similarly, the entire third act feels like one long emotional crescendo. AP

REVIEW

Job in fashion mag for reality show champ

FRESH ZERO: How does an ex-talk begin again after a messy break-up with her Hollywood bigwig husband? "The Source Wife," starring Debra Messing, airs Thursday evening May 7 at 8 p.m. on Hallmark Channel.

IF "THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA" WERE A series, it would be "Stylista."

The reality show, which combines drama, intrigue, controversy and unscripted comedy, pits 13 aspiring fashion enthusiasts against each other for a much-coveted editorial job with one of the most exclusive and elite fashion magazines—Elle.

Those hopefuls work in ensemble to Elle's fashion director/fashion, Anne Slowey, a demanding but well-respected fashion guru.

Each episode features a challenging assignment task and a fashion editorial assignment that the competitors must carry out—from styling a model to purchasing a fashion spread and even presenting their ideas in order to a client.

Every first one person each week until the last assistant standing gets "promoted" to the coveted real-life job opportunity.

The grand prize includes a paid editorial position at Elle magazine, a paid lease on an apartment in Manhattan and a clothing allowance of $1000, all for one year, valued at $100,000.

Stay Banks and Ben Mink of "America's Next Top Model" are executive producers of the show, which airs Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. on Bravo.

TV's 'Jungle'

The close-lacks of author Candace Bushnell's imagined "Lipstick Jungle" world continue their serious stories of love, loss and never-penny struggles on Mondays at 10 p.m. on 2nd season.

The series is based on the best-selling book by Bushnell about three powerful best friends in New York City—movie executive Wendy (Brooke Shields), fashion magazine editor-in-chief Nico (Kim Raver) and fashion designer Victory (Lindsay Price).

Meanwhile, Mary Tyler Moore guests as Wendy's mother who visits the family just as Wendy decides to spend more time at home. Victory loves a cheeky publicist (Debbi Brooke Perez) and plays football with Joe (Andrew McCarthy) as he tries to woo her back to him.

Cesar . . .

From page G1

ified Fitz," he declared. "I also want to talk with Manny Pacquiao because I want him for the lead role. We now polishing certain details in the script. Sixty percent of the movie will be in English."

In 2004, Cesar's first film production venture, "Foreplay or Infin," won 16 awards, including Best Picture and Best Director honors at the International Festival of Independent Films in Brussels, Belgium.

"My goal is for Tahimik to compete for an Oscar award," Cesar said.

He explained that the film's title is about the ancient Filipino writing system called Tahayo, which is similar to the more popular Alibata. Cesar learned about it while commuting with the members of the Tahayo tribe, a cultural society in Bohol, his hometown.

In Cesar's story line, a rich and highly successful American gets enlightened in a crime. He only chance to prove his innocence is to find the only witness in the crime. He chases after the witness in the forest of Bohol and stumbles upon the Tahayo tribe.

Interesting story

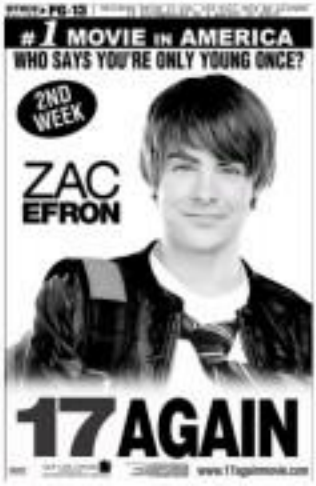
Cesar believes it's an interesting story. "It will send a message to the world that Filipinos are not illiterate, that in ancient times our ancestors had such a very effective way of communicating with each other."

Cesar, 46, is also busy with the Bohol Film Development Organization (BoFilm), which he helped form with veteran filmmaker Mareyn J. delos Reyes. The group is hosting "Sine Oleh," a film festival co-produced by APT Entertainment, in Bohol.

Sic films, all engaged by members of the Directors' Guild of the Philippines Inc. (DGPI), will be screened in various venues in Bohol. "It excites me to see these notable directors are making good movies and competing against each other," said Cesar, who is Bohol's vice president. "Our ultimate goal is to invite talented directors to join."

Four years ago, Cesar put up the Foreplay Children Foundation Inc. (www.foreplay.org), whose aim is to help underprivileged kids in Bohol through education. Since then, the group has launched feeding programs, as well as medical and dental missions in various provinces in Bohol.

"Recently, I brought several actors there to teach children how to draw," Cesar said. "To celebrate Earth Day we taught people how to plant trees. We informed them on climate change, global warming and the effects of irresponsible garbage disposal."



OPENS TODAY AT AYALA MALLS CINEMAS

50 bets vie for Ms RP-Earth

By Armin Adina

SEEKING MISS ENGLEWOOD-EARTH: Karla Paula Henry confirmed in the interview that she feels sad about giving up her crown and title.

But, upon seeing the 50 contestants vying for her crown, Henry said she is "excited because a new batch is coming in to cry out the things that we did."

Henry, a Cebuana who's also the reigning Miss Earth, said "when we crown the next Miss Philippines-Earth, I can focus more on my international duties and responsibilities." She hopes to carve a lot to spread the pageant's environmental advocacy and make Miss Earth known on a wider scale.

THE candidates of the Miss Philippines-Earth parade before photographers at the poolside of the Traders Hotel.

First Asian Miss Earth

The romp and commercial model is the third Bedlowing Filipina award to be crowned Miss Philippines-Earth. She failed to advance in the rival pageant's semifinals last year, but became the first Asian winner to be proclaimed Miss Earth.

Catherine Untalan, the 2008 Miss Philippines-Earth winner, admired she had also signed up for Ms. Philippine but failed to make the roster of candidates. Her visa-denied issue when she placed third in the Miss Earth international pageant.

Jeanne Skon, an only-handed to Ms. Philippine but was proclaimed Miss Philippines-Earth in 2007 and went on to win special citations in the Miss Earth pageant.

If the trend continues, some candidates may already have an advantage.

Victorias City's Ada Adelantar and Evangeline Mae Castillo of Cebu joined Ms. Filipinas in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Both failed to crack the Top 15.

Sandra Seibert, who was disqualified from Ms. Philippine 2009 two days before coronation night for posing in a man's magazine, is eyeing her hand in Miss Philippines-Earth representing Negros Occidental. The controversial beauty said she feels blessed for getting another opportunity to join the pageant.

Among the other contenders are 2009 Ms. Filipinas finalist Veronica Advincula of Apalit and 2007 Mutya ng Filipinas semifinalists Angelee de los Reyes of Olongapo City and Tarah Louise Skoody from the Filipino community in Melbourne, Australia.

Some early favorites include Michelle Martha Bocon of Adrian, Paula Figueroa of Davao Sur, and Texas Ranger from the Filipino community in Canada.

The Miss Philippines-Earth coronation night will be held on May 18, 7 p.m. at The Arena in San Juan City. It will be televised on ABS-CBN on the same night and will be beamed to other countries via The Filipino Channel.

REIGNING Miss Philippines-Earth Karla Paula Henry

The Tux reunites at La Salle gig

THE CELEBRATION OF LA SALLE Green Hills' 50th anniversary this year continues with the concert "LSGH, Daghwenteen, na!" featuring a reunion of top vocal group The Tux on May 13, 7:30 p.m. at the Rev. Gerard Center (formerly St. Joseph Theater), LSGH campus, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong. Four of the Tux's members—Pepe Suntay, Jess Mariano, Nonoy Silvestre and Louie Bulahan—are LSGH alumni. The rest of the group consists of Manny Aquino, Eric Asuncion and Ernie Sibug. Proceeds of the concert will go to the Our La Salle Scholarship Fund. Call 722-2008 loc. 704.

THE TUX

'Nostalgia' at Casino Filipino

"The Magic of Nostalgia" features singer Edgar Ojeda, Rose Santiago, Joy Ibarra and Alex D' Great on May 3, 9 p.m. at Magkling Hall, Casino Filipino in Tagaytay. Ojeda is also known as the Elvis Presley of Asia; Santiago the Ricky Nelson of the Philippines; and Ibarra the Connie Francis of the Philippines. Alex D' Great, a magician, is the show's host. Reservation: 2 free courtesy of Pagcor.

Pops at Captain's Bar

Pops Fernandez performs in a show dubbed "Sexpuls" on May 8, 9 p.m. at the Captain's Bar of Manila Oriental Hotel in Makati. The gig's title is a takeoff from her latest album, "Pops." Special guest is R&B singer Kris Lawrence. Call 7588888 loc. 3444 or 8106666.

Benefit show at Bagobenta

The band Allnick plays "70s and '80s music tonight at Bagobenta Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. The show is for the benefit of the Philippine General Hospital's Department of PST Club's Lip Inlay Program.

WCOPA champ at Library

Joaquin Gamba, the 2007 winner of the World Championships of the Performing Arts (WCOPA) in Hollywood, performs tonight, 10 p.m. at The Library, Metro Ortigas Hotel, Manila. Guest include Wendy Gutierrez and Philip Lazaro.

Pacquiao-Hatton via satellite

The Hyatt Hotel and Casino on Pedro Gil corner M.H. del Pilar, Malate, Manila will broadcast the Manny Pacquiao-Ricky Hatton boxing match in Las Vegas live via satellite on May 3, 8 a.m. at the hotel ballroom. A large projection screen will be used. Call 2451234.

Tomorrow

Acoustic Hour (8 p.m.) with Neil Jacello; and Brainchild Production night at Ring Pier Kalipunan, Quezon City.

May 2

Station Highway and more at Ring Net Kalipunan.

May 7

"Chicago's Finest" at Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila. Call 9115555.

May 8

"Chicago's Finest" at Alfa Theater, CCP Complex, Pasay.

May 10

"Chicago's Finest" at the Conrad Hotel Convention Hall, Ortigas City.

May 14

Josephin Silvestre at the Music Museum. Call 7210605; 725-1578 or 8519899.

May 16

Josephin Marcelo at Music Museum.

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ROBERTA Agustin shares his craft with aspiring performers.

Kapuso network continues to hold workshops for its artists

Honing a total *personality*

By Rayan Ian Diego Jr.

CHILD STAR ROYSTAL ROYO, who top-billed the Kapuso primetime series "Mga Iluna ni Anghelita," was discovered in one of the regular workshops conducted by the GMA Artist Center (GMAAC).

"Roystal was a student in one of the earlier batches of the workshops," recalls Ria Henares, assistant vice president and head of GMAAC.

The workshops, the current edition of which is currently ongoing, have been running for the past five years, Henares relates.

"We've exceeded the number of students this summer," she notes. Open to the public, the GMAAC summer workshop has attracted at least 200 students, she says.

Tips from pros

"We train our artists with seasoned students," she explains. "This is beneficial to both the professionals and neophytes."

The newcomers pick up tips from the pros who're acted in TV shows and movies. For their part, the vets can also learn such virtues as enthusiasm and kindness from the novices.

Henares says that the Kapuso network has garnered top facilitators for the workshops which are held twice a year for the summer and in December.

Among the teachers are stage actor Wendell Ramos and showbizzers Jim Libiran and Wendy Que. GMAAC has also tapped speakers the scenes Rochelle Pina and Marvin Agustin, director Mel Chionglo and Dennis Marasigan and TV host Norman Muraya.

Seven 12-year-old Royal Boys has signed up as speaker to the Rich Acting Workshop program.

Classes culminates with a digital film festival, Studio Stardom from the summer and December workshops act as movies that compete for prizes in the Studio fest.

Training venues

GMAAC has also teamed up with institutions like the Cultural Center of the Philippines's Dance group Bayanihang Pilipino, arts in the City and the National Arts Center in Malolos—which Henares plans to tap as venues for talent development.

"We're also working with Aileen Rubens Penares for personality development and L'Oréal for makeup sessions," she says.

Last January, GMAAC conducted a Talent Formation Seminar among its talents, with Anthony Pangilinan and Wilma Galvante as speakers.

"We wanted to start the year on the right note," Henares says. "In talent development, we are having not just the actors' skills or physical attributes, but their spirituality, too. We are addressing the totality of the artist."

Also on the works are curriculum workshops for its roster of 130 talents, which now include boxer Nonito Donaire.

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